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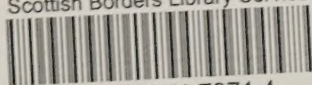
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A BOOK OF BORDER VERSE



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A BOOK OF BORDER VERSE

SELECTED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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PREFACE

Except for poems by Sir Walter Scott and one by Sir Richard Maitland, this collection includes only verses written by people born in Berwick, Roxburgh, Dumfries, Selkirk, or Peebles; verses, too, which deal intimately with the life, manners, and customs of those five Border counties.

It would be impossible to make a representative collection of Border poetry without drawing largely on the works of Sir Walter Scott, James Hogg, and John Leyden, or being indebted to the elaborate and appreciative criticism of Professor Veitch, Sir George Douglas, and the Rev. W. S. Crockett. My indebtedness to these writers will be manifest to everyone acquainted with their works.

I wish, therefore, to offer my sincere thanks to the following authors and literary executors for permission to use copyright poems: Mr. Will H. Ogilvie and the Rev. W. S. Crockett; to Miss Margaret Warrender for the pieces by Lady John Scott; to Mrs. Andrew Lang for the poems by Mr. Andrew Lang; and to Mr. H. B. Brown for extracts from the work of "J. B. Selkirk".

Thanks are also due to many friends for encouragement and help, particularly to the late Mr. W. Keith Leask of Aberdeen, whose interest in Scottish literature was both deep and abiding; and to the Senior Girls of Selkirk High School, for transcribing many of the verses. Finally, my especial thanks are due to the Rev. W. S. Crockett of Tweedsmuir, to whom every Borderer owes a debt of gratitude for many fine books on the Borderland, and who was so kind as to read the proofs of this collection.

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INTRODUCTION

It is fortunate that a writer on Border history, literature, or scenery, does not require to show that his subject is worthy and interesting. On the contrary, he is aware of a willingness in his readers to wait patiently for some fresh instance of beauty which hitherto may have escaped their eyes; for nowhere else in the world, one is tempted to think, have Nature and History compounded the ingredients of Romance in nicer proportions. But the very richness of the Borderland in natural beauty and suggestive fact, while it affords sympathy to anyone undertaking the perennial task of a synthesis of the charm, makes the attempt to unfold new glories, or to show old ones in a new way, all the more difficult to succeeding writers. Thrice happy is he, accordingly, whose duty it is to introduce the poets and leave them to their bidding.

We are assured that more than six hundred poets (the majority of them distinctly minor) have published poems of Border interest. Such activity is not surprising; nor would it be surprising if the total were six thousand. There is room enough and to spare. But it is remarkable how few of them have dealt adequately with their themes. Often there are lines of real poetry in their work, but very rarely does one come upon a perfect

poem. This is characteristic of the greater poets, too, with very few exceptions. James Hogg, for example, is notorious for his lack of what might be called artistic sufficiency.

There may be regret after reading this selection that some things have not been done better, but there will also be surprise that so much good poetry has been produced within the limited area of the five counties of Berwick, Roxburgh, Selkirk, Peebles, and Dumfries. Wordsworth in "Yarrow Visited" got very near the heart of the Yarrow mystery:

" Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy:
The grace of forest charms decay'd,
And pastoral melancholy"—

but masterly though his insight be, there is not the warmth of nativity in his lines. Our poets, with half the facility of Wordsworth, have done better. They do not proceed by means of analysis, but by telling a story, and the reader is left to form his own opinion. At the same time there is not a single poem which contains a full declaration of the Border spirit; nor even a poet (Scott being excepted) that has computed its varied richness. Little by little we reach an estimate as we turn from ballad to poem down the ages. But who will attempt a definition of the spirit when it has been found? The poets among them hold the secret, and it is to them that we must turn; but only those who know and love the five counties will succeed in feeling something of the magic.

An outstanding feature of the older poetry, and of much of the modern, is its sadness. The mood is the outcome of hard experience. For hundreds of years, the

Border counties were the minor battlefields of two nations; and when racial hatred did not rally Scots against English, the time was spent in cruel feud between man and man. Only the strong found existence fairly tolerable; and even they could not count on unbroken prosperity. A vigorous monarch like James IV, or James V, often descended on the Borders, to punish with death the stoutest spear of them all:

“ John murdered was at Carlinrigg,
And all his gallant companie ”; ¹

or,

“ I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed, and whiles I sate;
I digg'd a grave, and laid him in,
And happ'd him with the sod sae green ”. ²

If this treatment was given to the strong, how miserable must have been the portion of the weak! This “overpowering sadness and wail of unavailing sorrow” is the key-note of work like “The Lament of the Border Widow”, “The Flowers of the Forest”, “Selkirk after Flodden”, “The Douglas Tragedy”, “Willie drowned in Yarrow”, “Lucy's Flittin'”, and the incomparable “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow”:

“ She kissed his cheek, she kaim'd his hair,
She searched his wounds all thorough;
She kiss'd them, till her lips grew red,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow ”.

So bitter indeed is this cry of “never more”, that humour is a rare quality of Border poetry. There is a glint of something like it in “Jamie Telfer”, but it

¹ “Johnnie Armstrong”.

² “The Lament of the Border Widow”.

does not seem intentional. Where it does appear, as in a humorous ballad, there is grave doubt that the ballad is authentic. The battle of Flodden confirmed sorrow for all time to come. It is what one might look for after a consideration of the country's configuration. If the Pathans and Afghans on the North-West Frontier of India were articulate in a literary sense, the burden of their heaviness would be very similar to that of the Border people. It is curious how the deeds of men, and afterwards their literature, seem to come out of the soil. Perhaps among present-day writers this connexion between soil and deed is nowhere better expressed than in the work of Thomas Hardy. Like Egdon Heath, the Borders have "a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities".

Any consideration of Border verse which is not concerned first with the ballads is likely to be unprofitable. How the ballads came into being is outside our discussion.¹ We accept them well aware that what we have are copies of copies, and not infrequently copies that have been altered by their collectors. If Sir Walter Scott felt constrained to add a stanza here and there, and on occasion to rewrite practically the whole ballad, it is "nane the waur" of his rehandling. He merely availed himself of those liberties which any "blind crowder" took as often as he felt the need. The old ballads are the direct inspiration of nearly everything that has been written about the Borders. It was Scott who rescued them from oblivion. Having assimilated their spirit, he gave direction as well as impulse to all Border poets who should come after him. By the power of heart and of mind, he wove into a rare fabric the loose and tangled threads of Border Romance. The ballad

¹ The greatest authority on the ballads is Professor Child.

material was suited to his genius, and sustained him throughout the whole of his literary career, as much in the writing of prose as of verse.

The ballads are as much valued for the pictures of life they present as for their literary excellence. Apart from their historical value, the charm of the ballads lies in their simplicity, in their devotion to essentials, and in their warm regard for the popular hero or the popular cause. They express the feelings of a community.

The first four ballads deal with the supernatural. There was a time in Border history, as there has been in the history of every civilized people, when a belief in faëry, in a return from the dead, and in other things equally strange to our modern ways of thinking, was never questioned. It was a method of explaining phenomena.

"True Thomas", so far as history remembers him, must always remain somewhat shadowy and elusive. There has been a good deal of controversy with regard to his name. Was Rymour (or Rimour) a surname; or was Thomas called "the Rhymer" because of his poetic talent? That he was the author of "Sir Tristrem" has been disputed. Thomases spring up with provoking suddenness in other places than Ercildoune, and lay claim to the poem. There was a Thomas in the north of England, another in France, and an odd one or two in Germany. But for all the "clatter", and until better evidence is led for the prosecution, Thomas will be "True Thomas", and the poet who handled better than ever it had been handled before, the old material of Sir Tristrem.

It was characteristic of mediæval times that self-effacement was held to be one of the highest virtues. One writer was very much like another in matter and

style. The same idea was responsible for the dark anonymity that hangs over so much of the literature of the Middle Ages. "True Thomas" belongs to the age of monotony and repression, but he is not of the featureless folk. Rather is he a man of forceful style and character "who took a keen interest in national politics and in his neighbours' affairs, as well as in the literature of his age; who had friends whom he championed and enemies whom he hated; who collected and preserved older rhymes as well as made new ones".¹

Far greater, however, than his fame as a poet has been his reputation as a prophet. There is little, if anything, to show that he was regarded as possessing prophetic powers in his own day. Once it was settled that he had been to fairyland, and had chosen from the three gifts offered him by the Elfin Queen, that of the unlying tongue, hard matter was read into his merest word. For more than five hundred years after his death, the name of Thomas "the Rhymer" was of dreadful potency. The young Byron trembled every time he had to cross the Aul' Brig o' Balgownie (Aberdeen), for did he not fulfil the conditions of the old rime,

" Brig o' Balgownie, black 's your wa',
Wi' a wife's ae son and a mare's ae foal,
Doun ye shall fa' "?

Ever after his seven years' stay in fairyland, Thomas lived in the knowledge that he would be summoned back at any time. When a hart and a hind (timid creatures both) paced through the street of Ercildoune, he rose obedient to the call, and was never more seen. This translation, we feel, was an appropriate one; and it would serve little purpose to discuss the many sug-

¹ *Thomas the Rhymour and his Rhymes*, by John Geddie.

gestions for a more natural end. Long years afterwards James Hogg gave final shape to the belief in faëry in his wonderful "Kilmeny".

In "The Gay Goss-Hawk" we have a bird endowed with supernatural power. Its subject is characteristic of some of the best Border poetry—the triumph of love over every difficulty. Neither burning lead nor the risk of being buried alive disturb that mild face. On Lord William's part, the bitterness of a hundred years of strife does not sour his love for the "Southron" Maid.

The ballads, 5 to 10, are described as historical only for want of a better adjective. Fact and fiction are so blended that it is wellnigh impossible now to separate the two. In every case "foundations" have been discovered or invented for the historical ballads, usually by Sir Walter Scott, but it has to be admitted that they are not always convincing. The difficulty is that the old ballads were rewritten to fit fresh exploits which were considered worthy of remembrance. All the events which are chronicled are certainly possible happenings, even if we cannot quote chapter and verse. For example the siege of Thirlestane (in "Auld Maitland"), of which there is not a written record, was a very likely incident during the troubled times of the Balliol Wars. The historical ballads throw a strong light on social conditions, theories of land tenure, and the Border ideas of honour, which are extremely interesting. "Auld Maitland" expresses in no uncertain way the hatred of the Borderers for Edward I—there was ample justification—and the "vile Southron"; while many details are given of mediæval siege-work. "The Battle of Otterburn", one of the best-fought battles of the Middle Ages, gives a clear account of Border chivalry

and courage. Sir Walter Scott was always deeply moved by the simple but manly stanzas:

“ ‘ My wound is deep; I fain would sleep;
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And hide me by the braken bush,
That grows on yonder lilye lee.

“ ‘ O bury me by the braken bush,
Beneath the blooming brier,
Let never living mortal ken,
That ere a kindly Scot lies here.’ ”

The ballad of “ ‘The Outlaw Murray’ ” is curious for its information about the relations between the King and Border Chieftains, up to about the middle of the sixteenth century. Murray asserts his right to the land, not as a feudal holding under the King, but as won by his own good sword. The King sends James Boyd to question the outlaw:

“ ‘ Ask hym of quhom he haldis his lands,
Or, man, wha may his master be;
Desyre him come and be my man,
And hald of me yon forest frie ’ ”.

. Murray makes the reply:

“ ‘ Thir landis are mine,’ the Outlaw said,
‘ I own na king in Christentie;
Frae Soudron I this forest wan,
When the king nor ’s knights were not to see ’ ”.

Up to the time of James V all the country comprised in the valleys of Ettrick and Yarrow and the adjacent parts of the valley of Tweed was covered by a “ derke

forest", which according to our ballad was "awsom for to see". It is not to be supposed, however, that the forest was impenetrable, otherwise it would have been unsuitable as a hunting-ground. David I, William the Lion, Alexander II, Alexander III, Queen Margaret of Scotland, James IV, James V, and Mary Queen of Scots, all enjoyed right royal sport there hunting the deer and the wild boar.

On the occasion of one of his rides into the Borders in 1530 to punish certain notorious thieves, James V seems to have combined pleasure with business, for Lindsay of Pitscottie tells us that the King, the Earls of Athole, Argyle, and Huntly "with many othir Lordis and Gentlemen, to the number of twelf thousand, assemblit at Edinburgh, and thair fra went with the Kingis grace to Meggatland, in the quhilkis bounds war slaine, at that tyme, aughteine scoir of deir". Nowadays although the Forest cannot yield such sport, Royalty still find good hunting there. It is interesting to note how many place-names in Ettrick and Yarrow have reference to animals: Hart Fell, Brockhill (badger), Hyndhope, Todrig (fox), Cat Craig, Wolf Rig, &c.

For more than three hundred years the five counties were largely inhabited by reivers whose first concern in life was to harry and despoil their English neighbours. As the Rev. Robert Borland remarks:¹ "This phase of Border life does not mean that the old Borderers were dowered with a 'double dose of original sin'". Till near the end of the thirteenth century the Border counties were as law-abiding as any other part of Scotland; or at least there was little sign of that bitter hatred of the English which is such an outstanding feature of subse-

¹ *Border Raids and Reivers*, by Robert Borland, Minister of Yarrow, 1898.

quent history. It was the desire to make Scotland the northern part of England, and the methods adopted to attain that end, which must be given as the reason for three hundred years of raiding, desolation, and misery.

Ever after the sack of Berwick by Edward I, the English were the "enemy", in time the "auld enemy", to be harassed and spoiled on every suitable occasion. It was a patriotic duty. Constant raid and harry along the whole Border-line made it useless to attempt careful cultivation of the soil. In any case, the Borderland has not the richness of the Lothians or of Fife; and what might be raised by diligence would be destroyed, most likely, in the next English raid. It was a case of steal or starve.

But the English were not the only victims of this manner of life. The Scots, despoiled in turn by the English, turned their attention to the goods of their fellow-countrymen. Sir Richard Maitland in "*Aganis the Thievis of Liddisdale*" (the men of Liddesdale were by far the most lawless, owning neither Chief nor King) gives a vivid and circumstantial account of what was for long years a common plight of the "*lieges*".

The Rev. R. Borland, in writing of the "legitimate" raid, says: "It would seem that the season of year most favourable to reiving was between Michaelmas and Martinmas. The reason of this is not difficult to discover. The reivers in their expeditions hardly ever went on foot. They rode small hackneys—hardy, well-built animals—on which they cantered over hill and dale, moor and meadow, a circumstance which gained for them the name of hobylders. In the late autumn the moors and mosses were drier than at any other season of the year, which made riding, in certain districts

especially, a much more easy and expeditious undertaking. Then the winter supply had to be secured. The beef tub required replenishing, and as the 'mart' was rarely ever fed at home it had to be sought for elsewhere. It was a case of all hands to work, and every available horse or rider was brought into requisition.

"Leslie has given a graphic description of the methods adopted by the Border reivers to secure their booty. Everything was gone about in the most orderly and deliberate manner. He says that the reivers never told their beads with so much devotion as when they were setting out on a marauding expedition and expected a good booty as a recompense of their devotion! 'They sally out of their borders in troops, through unfrequented ways and many intricate windings. In the day time they refresh themselves and their horses in lurking places they had pitched on before, till they arrive in the dark at those places they have a design upon. As soon as they have seized upon their booty, they, in like manner, return home in the night; through blind ways and fetching many a compass. The more skilful any captain is to pass through these wild deserts, crooked turnings, and deep precipices, in the thickest mists and darkness, his reputation is the greater, and he is looked upon as a man of an excellent head, and they are so very cunning, that they seldom have their booty taken from them, unless sometimes, when by the help of bloodhounds, following them exactly upon the track they may chance to fall into the hands of their adversaries. When being taken they have so much persuasive eloquence, and so many smooth and insinuating words at command, that if they do not move their judge, nay and even their adversaries, to have

mercy, yet they incite them to admiration and compassion.'”¹

In “Jamie Telfer”, a ballad dealing with an English raid in the Scottish Border, there is a good deal of unconscious humour. Jamie seems to have been a harum-scarum individual who was not quite so expert at getting and keeping as his neighbours. There are sly references to his poverty; and we may well imagine, many a joke was raised at his expense in those stern old days. The Dodhead of Ettrick, which Scott gives as the locality of the incident, could not have been the scene. It was not possible for Telfer, even worked-up as he was, to cover the country in the time given him by the ballad. “Jamie Telfer” presents a good picture of life: fidelity to clan, romantic daring, honour at all hazards, and the bringing home of the dead.

Willie of Kinmont was an Armstrong “against whom the English had a quarrel for many wrongs he had committed, as he was indeed a notorious thief”. But for once he had right on his side. Contrary to the rules of Border truce, Willie was seized by a body of English as he was going up the Liddel on his way home after attending a peaceful meeting. His rescue, accordingly, was considered morally justifiable. Buccleuch had to answer to Queen Elizabeth (having been delivered up by the timid James VI), who was very wroth that her stout castle in “merrie Carlisle” should have been treated with such contempt. “How dared you undertake an enterprise so desperate and presumptuous?” demanded the offended Monarch. “What is it,” replied the undaunted Chieftain; “what is it that a man dares not do?”

¹ For much interesting information about the Borders and raiding methods, see Froissart.

In a letter belonging to the year 1826, Sir Walter Scott gives a delightful account of an incident that happened on the way back from Carlisle. "A cottage on the roadside between Longtown and Langholm, is still pointed out as the residence of the smith who was employed to knock off Kinmont Willie's irons, after his escape. Tradition preserves the account of the smith's daughter, then a child, how there was a *sair clatter* at the door about daybreak, and loud crying for the smith; but her father not being on the alert, Buccleuch himself thrust his lance thro' the window which effectually bestirred him. On looking out, the woman continued, she saw in the gray of the morning, more gentlemen than she had ever before seen in one place, all on horseback, in armour, and dripping wet—and that Kinmont Willie, who sat woman-fashion behind one of them, was the biggest carle she ever saw, and there was much merriment in the company."

Ettrick and Yarrow ever have been the home of tragedy; and nowhere else in Border literature has sorrow and loneliness, and tenderness found fitter expression than in the tragic ballads. Border sorrow is not an ordinary sorrow. It does not pass gradually into peace and acquiescence, but remains intense to the end of the sufferer's time. Religion cannot give consolation; and hope dies. When we speak of the peace and quietness that slide into the soul of him who seeks comfort in these southern hills we must be careful to distinguish the nature of that peace. It is the relief that comes to the watcher over a sick bed who has sat by the sufferer through nights of agony until death gives release. How far distant were those faint lines of dawn, what exquisite weariness lay between, only two people know. "The Dowie Dens" of Yarrow may be regarded as

containing the finer feeling of all Border tragedy. There is unspeakable sorrow reaching out to the end of time; but honour has been kept bright at the expense of love and death. The ballad is as native to the country as blood is to the heart. Professor Veitch has analysed with rare sympathy the appeal of a similar ballad, "The Douglas Tragedy": "In 'The Douglas Tragedy', we have a perfect concentration of picturesque and striking incidents. The flight of the lovers by night up the heights of Black Cleugh, the combat in which the maiden's father and seven brothers are slain, the maiden stooping to staunch her father's wounds, the struggle between regard for her family and affection for her lover, the continued flight from those dead faces pallid on the knowe, and sadly shadowed in the soft moonlight, are crowded into a brief intensity of impression."¹

It would be difficult to find anywhere a more artistic expression of utter loneliness than is contained in the five stanzas of "The Twa Corbies". We do not wish to know the name of the Knight, much less that of the lady, nor even the incidents that have left him lying dead on the cold hillside. The silence of the hills, broken but now and then by the cry of the curlew, holds his secret for evermore. And it is better so.

With Lady Grisell Baillie we pass into comparatively modern times; for though some of the ballad versions are not so old as the seventeenth century, there is a difference in tone. Lady Grisell may be sore-stricken, but her "hert is licht", and that makes all the difference. She had her reward. From this time forward, nearly everything that is written is inspired by the old ballads. This circumstance has often worked against the development of Border literature. A great number of minor

¹ *History and Poetry of the Scottish Border*, 1878.

poets have been tolerated, and worse still, unduly praised, merely because their work has contained an echo of the stirring past. Sometimes they have nothing else to offer. When men live in the past, the main characteristic of which is tragedy, their poetic utterance is apt to be faint unless they are men of first-rate genius. Literature, if it is to persist, must be fed by the present, and by hope of things to come. But preoccupation with the past has resulted in several poems of surpassing beauty. Of all these the best, and the most widely known, is Jean Elliot's "The Flowers of the Forest". Professor Veitch, that learned, large hearted, and understanding Borderer, says the occasion of the composition of "The Flowers of the Forest" was this: "When Miss Elliot was riding home in a carriage after nightfall to Minto House, from a party with her brother Gilbert, the conversation turned on Flodden, that disaster which left a sadness on the hearts of Scotchmen and Scotchwomen for three hundred years. The brother suggested to the sister, not perhaps believing much in her capacity for it, that this was a fitting subject for a song. She leant backwards in the carriage; and there, with the old refrain, 'The Flowers of the Forest are a' weede away', sounding in her ear, as a stray echo from the past, and mingling in fancy with the scenery of her life and love, and under the kindling of her true human heart, she framed 'The Flowers of the Forest'; that immortal lyric, in which simple natural pictures of joy and sadness are so exquisitely blended and contrasted, in which pathos of heart and patriotism of spirit, and a music that echoes the plaintive sough of the Border waters, passed, as it were spontaneously, into one consummate burst of song."

The work of Sir Walter Scott and that of James

Thomson had more influence on the trend of English literature than the combined product of all other Border poets. To the Romantic Revival Scott gave direction and impulse: Thomson first treated nature as a capital subject for poetical composition. Cradled among scenes of great natural beauty, Thomson carried to London the rich treasure of his observation, and unfolded before eyes that had been for a long time nearly blind, the matchless glory of the countryside.

“ With quickened step

Brown night retires: young day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawny prospect wide.
The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top,
Swell on the sight, and brighten with the day.
Blue, through the dusk, the smoking currents shine;
And from the bladed field the fearful hare
Limps awkward; while along the forest glade
The wild deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early passenger. Music, awakes
The native voice of undissembled joy;
And thick around the woodland hymns arise.”¹

If we have had our doubts about those piping shepherds of the olden time, we may well strengthen our faith after a study of James Hogg, “the Ettrick Shepherd”. The fairy tale has come true in more romantic vales than those of Arcady. Our man was a shepherd, of shepherd stock. Like Burns, he does not seem to have been a good farmer; but certainly he was a good shepherd, for Laidlaw of Blackhouse (near St. Mary's Loch in Selkirkshire) kept him ten years. His schooling

¹ Thomson's "Summer". For a full discussion of the influence of Thomson on other writers, and nature in poetry generally, see *The Feeling for Nature in Scottish Poetry*. Prof. Vench, 1887.

at Ettrickhall, his birthplace, lasted for some six months, but there were more potent factors of culture round him than school could give. At six he was herding on the green hillside for the half-yearly wages of a ewe lamb and a pair of shoes. A small beginning this, and likely enough to bring tears at twenty-five because he could not write. And yet he was filling his soul with that unearthly beauty, easily gathered by the right man in Ettrick and Yarrow, which was to be poured over the immortal "Kilmeny". Witchcraft, devilry, faëry, hard ridings by moonlight, and the sorrow of "never-more" were the substance of the tales he had heard from his cradle. They became bone of his bone; the ideal became the real, and the "Seely Court" on its circuit was a matter of clear vision. But even when this has been said, the wonder of his achievement is not explained.

When we come to judge his poetical work by the canons of strict criticism, we must admit that it is very uneven, and, not infrequently, uninspired. Naturally proud of his talent, he took delight in doing things without effort. Apparently Scott had this facility, but then Scott relied mainly on action for effect. When Hogg had a theme to his liking and well within his power, he often offended against good taste, or spoiled the unity by muddling with extraneous matter—or at least with matter better left out. Hogg's strength lies in the description of "simple, free, solitary nature", in his exquisite conception of faëry and the ability to express the power "of the awful and weird in a way such as almost no modern poet has expressed them".¹ The extracts given in this book show Hogg at his best.

An adequate discussion of the splendid genius of Sir

¹ Verch.

Walter Scott, and his large contribution to the literature of all time, could scarcely be confined within the covers of the bulkiest volume. This little book, and nearly all books on the Border and its literature, owe their origin, and their inspiration, to the infectious enthusiasm of Scott, who preserved the ballads for posterity and absorbed their spirit to such fine purpose that when he gives a place its epithet we recognize at once the justness, the inevitableness of the application: "sweet Teviot", "fair Melrose", "Newark's stately tower", "lone St. Mary's", "dark loch Skene", &c. Sir Walter's name appears on nearly every page of this book, a sign of his importance, and overshadowing greatness. Fortunately, literature on his life and work is easily obtainable and should be studied. Contemporary judgments on Scott, the Man, may be found under Hogg and Leyden.

Surely no country in the world ought to be more grateful to her peasantry than Scotland. From this class come many of her most gifted men and women—one of whom is John Leyden of Denholm. If he is not so well-known as the two other members of the triumvirate (Scott and Hogg), it is partly owing to his small literary output, and partly to his concentration on oriental languages. His integrity of character, his cheerful nature, and his dynamic enthusiasm for Scotland and its literature, was every bit as genuine as that of Scott himself, and perhaps somewhat greater than that of Hogg. "The Scenes of Infancy", although deserving of more attention than it gets, were it only for Leyden's attitude to nature, was mainly a combination of fragmentary effusions intended to keep their author in mind while he was in India. The title may suggest "drowsy outpourings" by some limpid stream, but nothing could be farther from the truth. "It moves as his own

soul did, in an atmosphere of freedom and heroic self-reliance, and breathes uniformly a manly piety and resoluteness of purpose which can only be found among nature's own nobility."¹ To *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* Leyden contributed three imitations of the ballad: "Lord Soulis", "The Cout of Keeldar", and "The Mermaid", the last being one of his finest efforts in verse. Scott gives a vivid picture of Leyden's enthusiasm for the work of collecting ballads: "He employed himself earnestly in the congenial task of procuring materials. . . . In this labour he was equally interested by friendship for the editor, and by his own patriotic zeal for the honour of the Scottish Borders, and both may be judged of from the following circumstance. An interesting fragment had been obtained of an ancient historical ballad, but the remainder, to the great disturbance of the editor and his coadjutor, was not to be recovered. Two days afterwards, while the editor was sitting with some company after dinner, a sound was heard at a distance like that of the whistling of a tempest through the torn rigging of the vessel which scuds before it. The sounds increased as they approached more near, and Leyden, to the great astonishment of such of the guests as did not know him, burst into the room, chanting the ballad, with the most enthusiastic gestures, and all the energy of the saw-tones of his voice already commemorated. It turned out that he had walked between forty and fifty miles, and back again, for the sole purpose of visiting an old person who possessed this precious remnant of antiquity."

The same amazing vitality was entirely characteristic of everything he took up. In India when told by

¹ *The Poetical Works of Dr. John Leyden*, with Memoir by Thomas Brown, 1875.

the doctor that he must remain quiet or he would die his answer was: "I cannot be idle." Truly he was Leyden the Indomitable.

Though the deaths of Scott and Hogg by no means silenced the Border Muse, it is unlikely that either of them will be surpassed in his particular art—that of action, and that of the supernatural. Besides the advantage of relationship with the doughtiest of all Border reivers, Scott had the right genius for the task of giving final shape to the mass of legendary and historical lore lying loose in written and unwritten records. The passing of the years, too, make it unlikely that anyone will repeat the triumph of the Shepherd.

Border poets, since the early part of the nineteenth century, have concerned themselves mainly with scenery and its effect on the human spirit. The romance of what has been colours almost every thought. "J. B. Selkirk" does not think of any other Yarrow than the one "garlanded with rhyme"; for Andrew Lang "the air is full of ballad notes"; Will Ogilvie cannot look across the moonlit moor without seeing the raiders "trooping down to the English Marches". While it would be hardly possible for modern writers to forget the background, there is considerable danger in brooding over what has been. Something more is required for the making of a poem than a mere catalogue of past glories. Indeed, one of the reasons for the failure of Scottish verse, as compared with English, since the time of Burns, has been this very preoccupation with the past.

It must be said of most of the poets who come after Scott and his contemporaries that their work is very unequal. James B. Brown ("J. B. Selkirk"), though undoubtedly a man of poetic worth, seldom produces

a perfect poem. As soon as he leaves his source of inspiration, Border scenery and tradition, he loses power and beauty. He is at his best in "A Song of Yarrow" and "Selkirk after Flodden", both subjects after his heart and quite within his powers. Andrew Lang wrote few poems which had definite application to the Borders. He took all romance for his kingdom so that one little part of it did not affect him to any great extent. The Border country he knew and loved, but his affection for other places was almost as great, and his knowledge as deep. For him the Border was a place of mental and spiritual refreshment—one dare not call it a holiday resort—and this attitude has become very common during the last fifty years. Angling songs there are in plenty, but only one finds a place in this anthology. The majority of such pieces have been written by others than those born in the Borders. Amongst living writers no poet has a surer hold of Border tradition, nor has given a better expression to its ideals than William Henry Ogilvie (Will Ogilvie). Born at Holefield, Kelso, he spent eleven years in the Australian bush, years that confirmed his love of the open, starlit spaces. Will Ogilvie's poetry reminds us of those pleasing lines from Andrew Lang, one of which has been quoted already:—

"The air is full of ballad notes,
Borne out of long ago,"

but such ballad notes as one hears in the freshness of morning or in the clear light of the moon when there is a touch of wind on the heather. He brings us so near to bygone days that it seems as if the plunge of raiding hoofs sounded in our ears but a minute ago. His

reivers ride with strength and purpose, with straight back and clear eye, and with no repining.

With regard to the opinions expressed about writers in this introduction, it must be remembered that the poet is fortunate above all men in this: that whatever is really great in his work remains untouched by time and criticism:—

“ I, too, pass on, but when I ’m dead
Thou still shalt sing by night and morrow,
And help the aching heart and head
To bear the burden of its sorrow.

“ And Summer’s flowers shall linger yet
Where all thy mossy margins guide thee;
And minstrels, met as we have met,
Shall sit and sing their songs beside thee.” ¹

G. B.

¹ “ A Song of Yarrow ”, by “ J. B. Selkirk ”.

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A BOOK OF BORDER VERSE

THOMAS THE RHYMER

THOMAS OF ERCILDOUNE

(1210?-1294?)

[Thomas of Ercildoune (Earlston, Berwickshire), otherwise Thomas Rimour de Erceldoune, lived during the greater part of the thirteenth century. His reputation as a prophet has always been much greater than that as poet; for the Queen of Fairyland gave him the tongue that could not lie. There is good reason for regarding Thomas as the "Father of Scottish Poetry". The ballad, one of the five versions given by Child, is modern, but it is based no doubt on an earlier version, itself based on "Sir Tristrem", the reputed work of "True Thomas".]

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank; ¹
A ferlie ² he spied wi' his e'e;
And there he saw a lady bright
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her skirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne,
At ilka tett ³ of her horse's mane
Hang fifty siller bells and nine.

¹ On the slope of the Eildons.
(D 638)

² Wonderful thing.
1

³ Lock.
B

True Thomas he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee:
" All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see!"

" O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
" That name does not belang to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

" Harp and carp,¹ 'Thomas," she said,
" Harp and carp, along wi' me,
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be!"

" Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird sall never daunton me;"
Syne he has kissed her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

" Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said,
" True 'Thomas, ye maun go wi' me,
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed,
She 's ta'en True Thomas up behind,
And aye whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on—
The steed gaed swifter than the wind—
Until they reached a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

¹ " To play or to speak above other mortals ".

“ Light down, light down, now, True Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

“ O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Tho’ after it but few enquires.

“ And see ye not that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven? ¹
That is the path of wickedness,
Tho’ some call it the road to heaven.

“ And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

“ But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see.
For, if you speak word in Elflin land,
Ye ’ll ne’er get back to your ain countrie.”

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded thro’ rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern ²
light,
And they waded thro’ red blude to the knee;
For a’ the blude that ’s shed on earth
Rins thro’ the springs o’ that countrie.

¹ Glade.

² Star.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
 And she pu'd an apple frae a tree:
 "Take this for thy wages, True Thomas,
 It will give the tongue that can never lie."

"My tongue is mine ain," True Thomas said,
 "A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
 I neither dought ¹ to buy nor sell,
 At fair or tryst where I may be.

"I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
 Nor ask of grace from fair ladye:"
 "Now hold thy peace," the lady said,
 "For as I say, so must it be."

He has gotten a coat of even cloth,
 And a pair of shoes of velvet green,
 And till seven years were gane and past
 True Thomas on earth was never seen.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

[From the recitation of an old woman residing near Kirkhill, in West Lothian, and published in Scott's *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The return of the dead to earth was regarded by our Border forefathers as a likely thing; and when it happened, there was no astonishment.

It should be noted here that all ballads taken from Scott's *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* are given as they appear in Messrs. Black's edition of 1880, which is a reprint of Lockhart's issue in 1833.]

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
 And a wealthy wife was she,
 She had three stout and stalwart sons,
 And sent them o'er the sea.

¹ Was able to.

They hadna been a week from her,
 A week but barely ane,
 When word came to the carline ¹ wife,
 That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
 A week but barely three,
 When word came to the carline wife,
 That her sons she 'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
 Nor fashes ² in the flood,
 Till my three sons come hame to me,
 In earthly flesh and blood."—

It fell about the Martinmas,
 When nights are lang and mirk,
 The carline wife's three sons came hame,
 And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke ³ nor ditch,
 Nor yet in ony sheugh; ⁴
 But at the gates o' Paradise,
 That birk grew fair enough.

"Blow up the fire, my maidens!
 Bring water from the well!
 For a' my house shall feast this night,
 Since my three sons are well."—

And she has made to them a bed,
 She 's made it large and wide;
 And she 's ta'en her mantle her about,
 Sat down at the bed-side.

¹ Old woman.

² Troubles.

³ Small stream.

⁴ Trench.

Up then crew the red red cock
 And up and crew the gray;
 The eldest to the youngest said,
 " 'T is time we were away."

The cock he hadna craw'd but once,
 And clapp'd his wings at a',
 Whan the youngest to the eldest said,
 " Brother, we must awa.

" The cock doth crawl, the day doth daw,
 The channerin' ¹ worm doth chide;
 Gin we be mist out o' our place,
 A sair pain we maun bide.²

" Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
 Fareweel to barn and byre!
 And fare ye weel, the bonny lass,
 That kindles my mother's fire."

THE GAY GOSS-HAWK

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Such a bird as "The Gay Goss-Hawk" was quite possible in the thoughts of the old Borderer.]

" O waly, waly,³ my gay goss-hawk,
 Gin your feathering be sheen!"⁴—
 " And waly, waly, my master dear,
 Gin ye look pale and lean!

" O have ye tint,⁵ at tournament,
 Your sword, or yet your spear?

¹ Fretting.

² Endure.

³ Exclamation usually of sorrow.

⁴ Shining.

⁵ Lost.

Or mourn ye for the southern lass,
Whom ye may not win near?"—

" I have not tint, at tournament,
My sword, not yet my spear;
But sair I mourn for my true love,
Wi' mony a bitter tear.

" But weel's ¹ me on ye, my gay goss-hawk,
Ye can baith speak and flee;
Ye sall carry a letter to my love,
Bring an answer back to me."—

" But how sall I your true love find,
Or how suld I her know?
I bear a tongue ne'er wi' her spake,
An eye that ne'er her saw."—

" O weel sall ye my true love ken,
Sae sune as ye her see;
For, of a' the flowers of fair England,
The fairest flower is she.

" The red, that 's on my true love's cheek,
Is like blood-drops on the snaw;
The white, that is on her breast sae fair
Like the down o' the white sea-maw.

" And even at my love's bour-door
There grows a flowering birk;
And ye maun sit and sing thereon
As she gangs to the kirk.

¹ It's lucky for me I have you.

“ And four-and-twenty fair ladyes
Will to the mass repair;
But weel may ye my ladye ken,
The fairest ladye there.”

Lord William has written a love-letter,
Put it under his pinion gray;
And he is awa to Southern land
As fast as wings can gae.

And even at the ladye's bour
There grew a flowering birk;
And he sat down and sung thereon
As she gaed to the kirk.

And weel he kent that ladye fair
Amang her maidens free;
For the flower, that springs in May morning,
Was not sae sweet as she.

He lighted at the ladye's yet,¹
And sat him on a pin;
And sang fu' sweet the notes o' love,
Till a' was cosh ² within.

And first he sang a low low note,
And syne he sang a clear;
And aye the o'erword ³ o' the sang
Was—“ Your love can no win here.”—

“ Feast on, feast on, my maidens a',
The wine flows you amang,
While I gang to my shot-window,⁴
And hear yon bonnie bird's sang.

¹ Gate.

² Quiet.

³ Burden.

⁴ Bow-window.

“ Sing on, sing on, my bonnie bird,
The sang ye sung yestreen;
For weel I ken, by your sweet singing
Ye ’re frae my true love sen.”

O first he sang a merry sang,
And syne he sang a grave;
And syne he picked his feathers gray,
To her the letter gave.

“ Ha’ there a letter frae Lord William;
He says he ’s sent ye three;
He canna wait your love langer,
But for your sake he ’ll die.”

“ Gae bid him bake his bridal bread,
And brew his bridal ale;
And I shall meet him at Mary’s ¹ Kirk,
Lang, lang or it be stale.”

The ladye’s gane to her chamber,
And a moanfu’ woman was she;
As gin she had ta’en a sudden brash,²
And were about to die.

“ A boon, a boon, my father deir,
A boon I beg of thee!”—
“ Ask ye not for that Scottish lord
For him you ne’er shall see.

“ But, for your honest asking else,
Weel granted it shall be.”—
“ Then, gin I die in Southern land,
In Scotland gar bury me.

¹ At St. Mary’s Loch.

² Sickness.

“ And the first kirk that ye come to,
Ye ’s gar the mass be sung;
And the next kirk that ye come to,
Ye ’s gar the bells be rung.

“ And when ye come to St. Mary’s Kirk,
Ye ’s tarry there till night.”
And so her father pledg’d his word,
And so his **promise** plight.

She has ta’en her to her bigly bour
As fast as she could fare;
And she has ta’en a sleepy draught,
That she had mix’d wi’ care.

And pale, pale grew her rosy cheeks,
That was sae bright o’ blee,¹
And she seem’d to be as surely dead
As any one could be.

Then spake her cruel step-minnie,²
“ Tak ye the burning lead,
And drap a drap on her bosome,
To try if she be dead.”

They took a drap o’ boiling lead,
They drapp’d it on her breast;
“ Alas! alas!” her father cried,
“ She ’s dead without the priest.”

She neither chatter’d wi’ her teeth,
Nor shiver’d wi’ her chin;
“ Alas! alas!” her father cried,
“ There is nae breath within.”

¹ Bloom.

² Step-mother.

“ Then up arose her seven brethren
And hew’d to her a bier;
They hew’d it frae the solid aik,
Laid it o’er wi’ silver clear.

Then up and gat her seven sisters
And sewed to her a kell;¹
And every steek² that they put in
Sewed to a silver bell.

The first Scots kirk that they cam to,
They garr’d the bells be rung;
The next Scots kirk that they cam to,
They garr’d the mass be sung.

But when they cam to St. Mary’s Kirk,
There stude spearmen all on a raw;
And up and started Lord William,
The chieftane mang them a’.

“ Set down, set down the bier,” he said,
“ Let me look her upon:”
But as soon as Lord William touch’d her hand,
Her colour began to come.

She brightened like the lily flower,
Till her pale colour was gone;
With rosy cheek, and ruby lip,
She smiled her love upon.

“ A morsel of your bread, my lord,
And one glass of your wine;
For I hae fasted these three lang days,
All for your sake and mine.

¹ Headdress.

² Stitch.

"Gae hame, gae hame, my seven bauld brothers,
 Gae hame and blaw yer horn!
 A trow ye wad hae gi'en me the skaith,
 But I 've gi'en you the scorn.

"Commend me to my grey father,
 That wished my saul gude rest;
 But wae be to my cruel step-dame,
 Garr'd burn me on the breast."

"Ah! woe to you, you light woman!
 An ill death may ye die!
 For we left father and sisters at hame
 Breaking their hearts for thee."

A LYKE-WAKE¹ DIRGE

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. "When any dieth, certaine women sing a song to the dead bodie, recyting the journey that the partye deceased must goe; and they are of beliefe (such is their fondnesse) that once in their lives, it is good to give a pair of new shoes to a poor man, for as much as, after this life, they are to pass barefoote through a great launde, full of thornes and furzen, except by the meryte of the almes aforesaid they have redeemed the forfeyte; for, at the edge of the launde, an ould man shall meet them with the same shoes that they were given by the partie when he was lyving; and, after he hathe shodde them, dismisseth them to go through thick and thin without scratch or scalle."—(MS. in Cotton Library.)]

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
 Every nighte and alle;
 Fire and sleete,² and candle lighte,
 And Christe receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away are paste,
 Every nighte and alle;

¹ Watch over a dead body.

² Possibly, salt.

To Whinny-muir thou comest at laste;
And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,¹
Every nighte and alle;
Sit thee down and put them on;
And Christe receive thy saule.

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gavest nane,
Every nighte and alle;
The whinnes shall pricke thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Whinny-muir when thou mayst passe,
Every nighte and alle;
'To Brigg ² o' Dread thou comest at laste;
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Brigg o' Dread when thou mayst passe
Every nighte and alle;
To purgatory fire thou comest at laste;
And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
Every nighte and alle;
The fire shall never make thee shrink;
And Christe receive thy saule.

If meate or drinke thou ne'er gavest nane
Every nighte and alle;
'The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thy saule.

¹ Stockings and shoes.

² The idea of having to cross a bridge before reaching Heaven is (or was) a fairly common belief in some parts of the world.

This ae night, this ae nighte,
 Every nighte and alle;
 Fire and sleete, and candle lighte,
 And Christe receive thy saule.

AULD MAITLAND

[Taken down by Scott from the recitation of Mrs. Hogg, the mother of the "Ettrick Shepherd", and first published in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The old lady blamed Sir Walter for spoiling the old ballads by printing them: "Ye hae spoilt them ategither. They were made for singin', an' no for readin'. . . . An' the warst o' a', they're neither richt spelt nor richt settin' doun." Richard Maitland lived in his Castle of Lauder or Thirlestane (near Lauder) during a considerable part of the thirteenth century.]

There lived a king in southern land,
 King Edward hight his name;
 Unwordily he wore the crown,
 Till fifty years were gane.

He had a sister's son o's ain,
 Was large of blood and bane;
 And afterward, when he came up,
 Young Edward hight his name.

One day he came before the king,
 And kneel'd low on his knee—
 "A boon, a boon, my good uncle,
 I crave to ask of thee!

"At our lang wars in fair Scotland,
 I fain hae wish'd to be;
 If fifteen hundred waled ¹ wight men
 You 'll grant to ride wi' me."—

¹ Chosen.

“Thou sall hae thae, thou sall hae mae;
I say it sickerlie;
And I mysell, an auld gray man,
Array’d your host sall see.”—

King Edward rade, King Edward ran—
I wish him dool and pynel
Till he had fifteen hundred men
Assembled on the Tyne.

And thrice as many at Berwicke
Were all for battle bound,
[Who, marching forth with false Dunbar,¹
A ready welcome found.]

They lighted on the banks of Tweed,
And blew their coals sae het,
And fired the Merse² and Teviotdale,
All in an evening late.

As they fared up o’er Lammermore,
They burn’d baith up and down,
Until they came to a darksome house,
Some call it Leader-Town.

“Wha hauds this house?” young Edward cry’d,
“Or wha gies’t ower to me?”
A gray-hair’d knight set up his head,
And crackit richt crouselly.

“Of Scotland’s king I haud my house:
He pays me meat and fee;
And I will keep my guid auld house,
While my house will keep me.”—

¹ This line and the following inserted by Hogg.

² Berwickshire.

They laid their sowies ¹ to the wall,
Wi' mony a heavy peal;
But he threw ower to them agen
Baith pitch and tar barrel.

With springalds,² stanes, and gads ³ of airn,
Amang them fast he threw;
Till mony of the Englishmen
About the wall he slew.

Full fifteen days that braid host lay,
Sieging Auld Maitland keen;
Syne they hae left him, hail and fier,
Within his strength of stane.

Then fifteen barks, all gaily good,
Met them upon a day,
Which they did lade with as much spoil
As they could bear away.

“ England 's our ain by heritage;
And what can us withstand,
Now we hae conquer'd fair Scotland,
With buckler, bow, and brand?”—

Then they are on to the land o' France,
Where auld King Edward lay,
Burning baith castle, tower, and town,
That he met in his way.

Until he came unto that town,
Which some call Billop-Grace;

¹ Covering for besiegers, cf. Hay-sow. ² Mechanical catapults.

³ Sharpened bars of iron.

There were Auld Maitland's sons, a' three,
Learning at school, alas!

The eldest to the youngest said,
"O see ye what I see?
Gin a' be trew yon standard ¹ says,
We 're fatherless a' three.

"For Scotland 's conquer'd up and down;
Landmen we 'll never be;
Now, will you go, my brethren two,
And try some jeopardy?"—

Then they hae saddled twa black horse,
Twa black horse and a gray;
And they are on to King Edward's host,
Before the dawn of day.

When they arrived before the host,
They hover'd on the lay—
"Wilt thou lend me our king's standard,
To bear a little way?"—

"Where wast thou bred? Where wast thou born?
Where, or in what countrie?"—
"In north of England I was born;"
(It needed him to lie.)

"A knight me gat, a lady bore,
I am a squire of high renowne;
I well may bear 't to any king,
That ever yet wore crowne."—

¹ Edward quartered the Scottish arms with his own.

“ He ne’er came of an Englishman,
Had sic an ee or bree;
But thou art the likest Auld Maitland,
That ever I did see.

“ But sic a gloom on ae browhead,
Grant I ne’er see again!
For mony of our men he slew,
And mony put to pain.”—

When Maitland heard his father’s name,
An angry man was he!
Then, lifting up a gilt dagger,
Hung low down by his knee,

He stabb’d the knight the standard bore,
He stabb’d him cruellie;
Then caught the standard by the neuk,
And fast away rode he.

“ Now, is ’t na time, brothers,” he cried,
“ Now, is ’t na time to flee?”—
“ Ay, by my sooth!” they baith replied,
“ We ’ll bear you company.”—

The youngest turn’d him in a path,
And drew a burnished brand,
And fifteen of the foremost slew,
Till back the lave did stand.

He spurr’d the gray into the path,
Till baith his sides they bled—
“ Gray! thou maun carry me away,
Or my life lies in wad!”¹—

¹ Pledge.

The captain lookit ower the wa',
About the break o' day;
There he beheld the three Scots lads,
Pursued along the way.

"Pull up portcullize! down draw-brigg!
My nephews are at hand;
And they sall lodge wi' me to-night,
In spite of all England."—

Whene'er they came within the yate,
They thrust their horse them frae,
And took three lang spears in their hands;
Saying: "Here sall come nae mae!"

And they shot out, and they shot in,
Till it was fairly day;
When mony of the Englishmen
About the draw-brigg lay.

Then they hae yoked carts and wains,
To ca' their dead away,
And shot auld dykes abune the lave,
In gutters where they lay.

The king, at his pavilion door,
Was heard aloud to say,
"Last night, three o' the lads o' France
My standard stole away.

"Wi' a fause tale, disguised, they came,
And wi' a fauser trayne;
And so regain my gay standard,
These men were a' down slayne."—

“ It ill befits,” the youngest said,
“ A crowned king to lie;
But, or that I taste meat and drink,
Reproved sall he be.”

He went before King Edward straight,
And kneel’d low on his knee;
“ I wad hae leave, my lord,” he said,
“ To speak a word wi’ thee.”—

The king he turn’d him round about,
And wistna what to say—
Quo’ he, “ Man, thou ’s hae leave to speak
Though thou should speak a’ day.”—

“ Ye said, that three young lads o’ France,
Your standard stole away,
Wi’ a fause tale, and fauser trayne,
And mony men did slay;—

“ But we are nane the lads o’ France,
Nor e’er pretend to be;
We are three lads o’ fair Scotland,
Auld Maitland’s sons are we;

“ Nor is there men, in a’ your host,
Daur fight us three to three.”—

“ Now, by my sooth,” young Edward said,
“ Weel fitted ye sall be!

“ Piercy sall with the eldest fight,
And Ethert Lunn wi’ thee;
William of Lancaster the third,
And bring your fourth to me!”

[“ Remember, Piercy, aft the Scot ¹
Has cower’d beneath thy hand:]
For every drap of Maitland blood,
I ’ll gie a rig of land.”—

He clanked Piercy ower the head,
A deep wound and a sair,
Till the best blood o’ his bodie
Came rinning down his hair.

“ Now, I ’ve slayne ane; slay ye the twa;
And that ’s gude companye;
And if the twa suld slay ye baith,
Ye ’se get na help frae me.”

But Ethert Lunn, a baited bear,
Had many battles seen;
He set the youngest wonder sair,
Till the eldest he grew keen—

“ I am nae king, nor nae sic thing
My word it shanna stand!
For Ethert sall a buffet bide,
Come he beneath my brand.”

He clankit Ethert ower the head,
A deep wound and a sair,
Till the best blood of his bodie
Came rinning ower his hair.

“ Now I ’ve slayne twa; slaye ye the ane;
Isna that gude companye?
And tho’ the ane suld slaye ye baith,
Ye ’se get nae help o’ me.”

¹ This line and the following inserted by Hogg.

The twa-some they hae slayne the ane;
They maul'd him cruellie;
Then hung them ower the draw-brigg,
That all the host might see.

They rade their horse, they ran their horse,
Then hover'd on the lee:
“We be three lads o' fair Scotland,
That fain would fighting see.”

This boasting when young Edward heard,
An angry man was he!
“I'll tak yon lad, I'll bind yon lad,
And bring him bound to thee!”--

“Now God forbid,” King Edward said,
“That ever thou suld try!
Three worthy leaders we hae lost,
And thou the fourth wad lie.

“If thou shouldst hang on yon draw-brigg,
Blythe wad I never be!”
But, wi' the poll-axe in his hand,
Upon the brigg sprang he.

The first stroke that young Edward gae,
He struck wi' might and mayn;
He clove the Maitland's helmet stout,
And bit right nigh the brayn.

When Maitland saw his ain blood fa',
An angry man was he!
He let his weapon frae him fa',
And at his throat did flee.

And thrice about he did him swing,
Till on the grund he light;
Where he has halden young Edward,
Tho' he was great in might.

"Now let him up," King Edward cried,
"And let him come to me!
And for the deed that thou hast done
Thou shalt hae erldomes three!"—

"It's ne'er be said in France, nor e'er
In Scotland, when I'm hame,
That Edward once lay under me,
And e'er gat up again!"

He pierced him through and through the heart,
He maul'd him cruellie;
Then hung him ower the draw-brigg,
Beside the other three.

"Now take frae me that feather-bed.
Make me a bed o' strae!
I wish I hanna lived this day,
To mak my heart sae wae.

"If I were ance at London Tower,
Where I was wont to be,
I never mair suld gang frae hame,
Till borne on a bier-tree."

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE

[Put together from two copies supplied by James Hogg, and published in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Of an older version Sir Philip Sidney says: "Certainly, I must confesse my own barbarousness, I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet." Otterburn was fought on the 19th August, 1388.]

It fell about the Lammas tide,
When the muir-men win ¹ their hay,
The doughty Douglas bound him to ride
Into England, to drive a prey.

He chose the Gordons and the Græmes,
With them the Lindsays, light and gay,
But the Jardines wald not with him ride,
And they rue it to this day.

And he has burn'd the dales of Tyne,
And part of Bambrough shire;
And three good towers on Reidswire fells,
He left them all on fire.

And he march'd up to Newcastle,
And rode it round about;
"O wha's the lord of this castle,
Or wha's the lady o't?"—

But up spake proud Lord Percy, then,
And O but he spake hie!
"I am the lord of this castle,
My wife's the lady gay."

¹ Dry.

“ If thou ’rt the lord of this castle,
Sae weel it pleases me!
For, ere I cross the Border fells,
The tane of us shall die.”

He took a lang spear in his hand,
Shod with the metal free,
And for to meet the Douglas there,
He rode right furiouslie.

But O how pale his lady look’d,
Frae aff the castle wa’,
When down before the Scottish spear
She saw proud Percy fa’.

“ Had we twa been upon the green,
And never an eye to see,
I wad hae had you, flesh and fell;
But your sword sall gae wi’ me.”

“ But gae ye up to Otterbourne,
And wait there dayis three;
And, if I come not ere three dayis end,
A fause knight ca’ ye me.”—

“ The Otterbourne ’s a bonny burn;
’T is pleasant there to be;
But there is nought at Otterbourne,
To feed my men and me.

“ The deer rins wild on hill and dale,
The birds fly wild from tree to tree;
But there is neither bread nor kale,
To fend ¹ my men and me.

¹ Provide for.

“ Yet I will stay at Otterbourne,
Where you shall welcome be;
And, if ye come not at three dayis end,
A fause lord I ’ll ca’ thee.”—

“ Thither will I come,” proud Percy said,
“ By the might of Our Lady!”—
“ There will I bide thee,” said the Douglas,
“ My troth I plight to thee.”

They lighted high on Otterbourne,
Upon the bent sae brown;
They lighted high on Otterbourne,
And threw their pallions down.

And he that had a bonnie boy,
Sent out his horse to grass;
And he that had not a bonnie boy,
His ain servant he was.

But up then spake a little page
Before the peep of dawn—
“ O waken ye, waken ye, my good lord,
For Percy ’s hard at hand.”—

“ Ye lie, ye lie, ye liar loud!
Sae loud I hear ye lie:
For Percy had not men yestreen
To dight ¹ my men and me.

“ But I have dream’d a dreary dream
Beyond the Isle of Sky;
I saw a dead man win a fight,
And I think that man was I.”

¹ To engage effectively.

He belted on his guid braid sword,
And to the field he ran;
But he forgot the helmet good,
That should have kept his brain.

When Percy wi' the Douglas met,
I wat he was fu' fain!
They swakked ¹ their swords, till sair they swat
And the blood ran down like rain.

But Percy with his good broad sword,
That could so sharply wound,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow,
Till he fell to the ground.

Then he call'd on his little foot-page,
And said—" Run speedilie,
And fetch my ain dear sister's son,
Sir Hugh Montgomery.

" My nephew good," the Douglas said,
" What recks the death of ane!
Last night I dream'd a dreary dream,
And I ken the day's thy ain.

" My wound is deep; I fain would sleep;
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And hide me by the braken bush,
That grows on yonder lilye lee.

" O bury me by the braken bush,
Beneath the blooming brier,
Let never living mortal ken,
That ere a kindly Scot lies here."

¹ Wielled, smote.

He lifted up that noble lord,
Wi' the saut tear in his ee;
He hid him in the braken bush,
That his merrie-men might not see.

The moon was clear, the day drew near,
The spears in flinders ¹ flew,
But mony a gallant Englishman
Ere day the Scotsmen slew.

The Gordons good, in English blood,
They steep'd their hose and shoon;
The Lindsays flew like fire about,
Till all the fray was done.

The Percy and Montgomery met,
That either of other were fain;
They swapped swords, and they twa swat,
And aye the blood ran down between.

"Now yield thee, yield thee, Percy," he said,
"Or else I vow I'll lay thee low!"—
"To whom must I yield," quoth Earl Percy,
"Now that I see it must be so?"—

"Thou shalt not yield to lord nor loun,²
Nor yet shalt thou yield to me;
But yield thee to the braken bush,
That grows upon yon lilye lee!"—

"I will not yield to a braken bush,
Nor yet will I yield to a brier;
But I would yield to Earl Douglas,
Or Sir Hugh the Montgomery, if he were here."

¹ Splinters.

² Person of low rank.

As soon as he knew it was Montgomery,
 He struck his sword's point in the gronde;
 The Montgomery was a courteous knight,
 And quickly took him by the honde.

This deed was done at Otterbourne,
 About the breaking of the day;
 Earl Douglas was buried ¹ at the braken bush,
 And the Percy led captive away.

THE OUTLAW MURRAY

[From Herd's MS. Refers to some transaction between a Scottish King, perhaps James IV, and an ancestor of Murray of Philiphaugh, Selkirkshire. The ballad sheds a strong light on the relations between King and Border Chieftain up to about the middle of the sixteenth century.]

Ettrick ² forest is a fair forest,
 In it grows manie a semelie trie;
 The hart, the hynd, the dae,³ the rae,⁴
 And of a' (wylde) beastis grete plentie.

There 's a castell biggit ⁵ with lime and stane,
 O gin it stands not pleasantlie!
 In the fore front o' that castell fair
 Twa unicorns are bra to see.

There 's the picture of a knight and a ladye bright,
 And the grene hollin ⁶ aboon their brie;⁷
 There an Outlaw keepis five hundred men,
 He keepis a royalle companie.

¹ Really in Melrose Abbey.
⁴ Roe.

⁵ Built.

² See Introduction.

⁶ Holly.

³ Doe.

⁷ Brow.

His merrie men are in [ae] liverie clad,
 Of the Lincoln grene so fair to see;
 He and his ladye in purple clad,
 O if they live not royallie!

Word is gane to our noble king,¹
 In Edinburgh where that he lay,
 That there was an Outlaw in Ettrick forest
 Counted him nought and all his courtrie gay.

"I mak a vowe," then the goode king said,
 "Unto the man that dear bought me,
 I 'se either be king of Ettrick forest,
 Or king of Scotland that Outlaw 'l be."

Then spak the erle hight ² Hamilton,
 And to the noble king said he;
 "My sovereign prince, sum counsell tak,
 First of your nobles, syne of me.

"I redd ³ you send yon bra Outlaw till
 And see gif your man cum will he;
 Desire him cum and be your man,
 And hald of you yon forest frie.

"And gif he refuses to do that,
 We 'll conquer both his lands and he,
 Or else we 'll throw his castell down,
 And mak a widowe of his gaye ladye."

The king called on a gentleman,
 James Boyd,⁴ Erle of Arran, his brother was he;
 When James he came before the king
 He fell before him on his knie.

¹ James IV (?).

² Called.

³ Advise.

⁴ In favour with James IV about 1482.

"Wellcum, James Boyd," said our noble king,
"A message ye maun gang for me;
Ye maun hie to Ettrick forest,
To yon Outlaw, where dwelleth he.

"Ask hym of quhom he haldis his lands,
Or, man, wha may his master be;
Desyre him cum and be my man,
And hald of me yon forest frie.

"To Edinburgh to cum and gang
His safe-warrant ¹ I sall be;
And, gif he refuses to do that,
We 'll conquer baith his lands and he.

"Thou mayst vow I 'll cast his castell down,
And make a widow of his gay ladye;
I 'll hang his merrie men pair by pair
In ony frith ² where I may them see."

James Boyd took his leave of the noble king,
To Ettrick forest fair came he;
Down Birkendale ³ brae when that he cam,
He saw the fair forest with his ee.

Baith dae and rae and hart and hynd,
And of all wylde beastis grete plentie;
He heard the bows that bauldly ring,
And arrows whidderand⁴ near him by.

Of the fair castell he got a sight,
The like he nere saw with his ee;
On the fore front of that castell
Twa unicorns were bra to see.

¹ Safe-conduct.

² Wood.

³ On south side of Minchmoor, partly in Peeblesshire and partly in Selkirkshire.

⁴ Whizzing.

The picture of a knight and a ladye bright,
And the grene hollin aboon their brie;
Thereat he spy'd five hundred men,
Shuting with bows upon the lee.

They a' were in ae liverie clad,
Of the Lincoln grene, sae fair to see;
The knight and his ladye in purple clad;
O gif they lived right royallie!
Therefore he kend he was master-man,
And served him in his ain degree.

"God mot thee save, brave Outlaw Murray,
Thy ladye and a' thy chivalrie!"
"Marry, thou 's wellcum, gentleman,
Sum king's-messenger thou seems to be."

"The King of Scotland sent me hier,
And, gude Outlaw, I 'm sent to thee;
I wad wat of whom ye hald your landis,
Or, man, wha may thy maister be."

"Thir landis are mine," the Outlaw said,
"I own na king in Christentie;
Frae Soudron ¹ I this forest wan,
When king or 's knights were not to see."

"He desires you 'll come to Edinburgh
And hald of him this forest frie;
And gif you refuse to do this,
He 'll conquer both thy landis and thee;
He has vowd to cast thy castell down,
And make a widow of thy gaye ladye.

¹ I.e. the Englishman.

“ He ’ll hang thy merrie men pair by pair,
In ony frith where he may them finde.”

“ Aye, by my troth,” the Outlaw said,
“ Then wad I think me far behinde.

“ Ere the king my fair countrie get,
This land that ’s nativest to me,
Mony of his nobils sall be cauld,
Their ladyes sall be right wearie.”

Then spak his ladye fair of face,
She said, “ Without consent of me
That an outlaw shuld come before the king:
I am right rad ¹ of treasonrie.

“ Bid him be gude to his lordis at hame,
For Edinburgh my lord sall never see.”
James tuke his leave of the Outlaw keene,
To Edinburgh boun is he.

And when he came before the king,
He fell before him on his knie:
“ Wellcum, James Boyd,” said the noble king,
“ What forest is Ettrick forest frie?”

“ Ettrick forest is the fairest forest
That ever man saw with his ee;
There ’s the dae, the rae, the hart, the hynde,
And of a’ wylde beastis grete plentie.

“ There ’s a prittie castell of lime and stane,
O gif it stands not pleasauntlie!
There ’s on the fore of that castell
Twa unicorns sae bra to see.

¹ Afraid.

“ There’s the picture of a knight and [a] ladye
bright,
And the grene hollin aboon their brie;
There the Outlaw keepis five hundred men,
O gif they live not royallie!

“ His merry men in [ae] liverie clad,
O the Lincoln grene, so fair to see;
He and his ladye in purple clad,
O gif they live not royallie!

“ He says yon forest is his ain,
He wan it from the Soudronie;
Sae as he won it, sae will he keep it,
Contrair all kings in Christentie.”

“ Gar ray ¹ my horse,” said the noble king,
“ To Ettrick hie will I me;”
Then he gard graith ² five thousand men,
And sent them on for the forest frie.

Then word is gane the Outlaw till,
In Ettrick forest where dwelleth he,
That the king was cumand to his cuntrie,
To conquer baith his lands and he.

“ I mak a vow,” the Outlaw said,
“ I mak a vow, and trulie,
Were there but three men to tak my part,
Yon king’s cuming full deir suld be.”

Then messengers he called forth,
And bade them haste speedilie;

¹ Saddle.

² Caused to be made ready.

“ Ane of you go to Halliday,
The laird of the Corehead ¹ is he.

“ He certain is my sister’s son,
Bid him cum quick and succour me;
Tell Halliday with thee to cum,
And shaw him a’ the veritie.”

“ What news? what news?” said Halliday,
“ Man, frae thy master unto me?”
“ Not as ye wad; seeking your aid;
The king’s his mortal enemy.”

“ Aye, by my troth,” quoth Halliday,
“ Even for that it repenteth me;
For, gif he lose fair Ettrick forest,
He’ll take fair Moffatdale frae me.

“ I’ll meet him wi’ five hundred men,
And surely mae, if mae may be:”
[The Outlaw called a messenger,
And bid him hie him speedily.]

“ To Andrew Murray ² of Cockpool,
That man’s a deir cousin to me;
Desire him cum and make me aid,
With all the power that he may be.

“ The king has vowd to cast my castell down,
And mak a widow of my gay ladye;
He’ll hang my merrie men pair by pair
I’ ony place where he may them see.”

¹ At the head of Moffat-water.

² Ancestor of the Earls of Annandale; but the representative in time of James IV was William, not Andrew. (Scott.)

“ It stands me hard,” quoth Andrew Murray,
 “ Judge if it stands not hard with me,
 To enter against a king with crown,
 And put my lands in jeopardie.

“ Yet, gif I cum not on the daye,
 Surelie at night he sall me see:”
 To Sir James Murray, laird of Traquair,
 A message came right speedilie.

“ What news? what news?” James Murray said,
 “ Man, frae thy master unto me?”
 “ What needs I tell? for well ye ken
 The king ’s his mortal enemie.

“ He desires ye ’ll cum and make him aid,
 With all the powers that ye may be.”
 “ And, by my troth,” James Murray said,
 “ With that Outlaw I ’ll live and die.

“ The king has gifted my lands lang syne,
 It can not be nae war ¹ with me;”

.

The king was cumand thro Cadden ² ford,
 And fiftene thousand men had he;
 They saw the forest them before,
 They thought it awsom for to see.

Then spak the erle hight Hamilton,
 And to the noble king said he,
 My sovereign prince, sum counsell take,
 First at your nobles, syne at me.

¹ Worse.

² Near Ashiestiel.

“Desyre him meet you at Penman’s Core,¹
And bring four in his cumpanie;
Fyve erles sall gang yoursell before,
Gude cause that you suld honord be.

“And, if he refuses to do that,
Wi’ fire and sword we ’ll follow thee;
There sall never a Murray after him,
Have land in Ettrick forest frie.”

The king then called a gentleman,
Royal-banner-bearer then was he,
James Hop-Pringle of Torsonse by name;
He came and knelit upon his knie.

“Wellcum, James Pringle of Torsonse;²
Ye man a message gae for me;
Ye man gae to yon Outlaw Murray,
Surely where bauldy bideth he.

“Bid him meet me at Penman’s Core,
And bring four of his cumpanie;
Five erles sall cum wi mysell,
Gude reason I suld honord be.

“And gif he refuses to do that,
Bid him look for nae gude o’ me;
There sall never a Murray after him
Have land in Ettrick forest frie.”

James came before the Outlaw keene,
And served him in his ain degree:

“Wellcum, James Pringle of Torsonse,
What tidings frae the king to me?”

¹ I.e. Permanscore, to east of Minchmoor.

² Name of great antiquity in Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire. The old Tower of Torsonse was on Gala-water.

“ He bids you meet him at Penman’s Core,
And bring four of your cumpanie;
Five erles will cum with the king,
Nae more in number will he be.

“ And gif you refuse to do that,
I freely here upgive ¹ with thee,
There will never a Murray after thee
Have land in Ettrick forest frie.

“ He ’ll cast your bonny castell down,
And make a widow of your gay ladye,
He’ ll hang your merrie men pair by pair
In any place where he may them see.”

“ It stands me hard,” the Outlaw said,
“ Judge if it stands not hard with me,
I reck not of losing of mysell,
But all my offspring after me.

“ Auld Halliday, young Halliday,
Ye sall be twa to gang wi’ me;
Andrew Murray and Sir James Murray,
We ’ll be nae mae in cumpanie.”

When that they came before the king,
They fell before him on their knie:
“ Grant mercy, mercy, royal king,
Een for his sake who died on trie!”

“ Sicken-like mercy sall ye have,
On gallows ye sall hangit be.”

¹ Avow.

"God forbid!" quod the Outlaw then,

"I hope your Grace will better be.

"These landis of Ettrick forest fair,

I wan them frae the enemy;

Like as I wan them, sae will I keep them,

Contrair all kings in Christentie."

All the nobles said, the king about,

Pitye it were to see him die;

"Yet graunt me mercye, sovereign prince,

Extend your favour unto me!

"I'll give you the keys of my castell,

With the blessing of my fair ladye;

Mak me the sheriff of the forest,

And all my offspring after me."

"Wilt thou give me the keys of thy castell,

With the blessing of thy fair ladye?

I'll mak the[e] sheriff of the forest,

Surely while upwards grows the tree;

If you be not traytour to the king,

Forfaulted sall ye never be."

"But, prince, what sall cum o' my men?

When I go back, traitour they'll ca' me:

I had rather lose my life and land,

E'er my merrie men rebuked me."

"Will your merrie men amend their lives,

And all their pardouns I grant thee:

Now name thy landis whe're they be,

And here I render them to thee."

“ Fair Philiphaugh,¹ prince, is my ain,
 I biggit it wi’ lime and stane;
 The Tinnies and the Hangingshaw,
 My leige, are native steeds of mine.

“

I have many steeds in the forest shaw,
 But them by name I dinna knaw.”

The keys of the castell he gave the king,
 With the blessing of his fair ladye;
 He was made sheriff ² of Ettrick forest,
 Surely while upward grows the trie;
 And, if he was not traytour to the king,
 Forfaulted he suld never be.

Wha ever heard, in ony tymes,
 Sicken an outlaw in his degree
 Sic favour get before a king
 As did the Outlaw Murray of the forest frie?

¹ On the Yarrow, near Selkirk.

² “In a Charter from James IV, dated 30th November, 1509, John Murray of Philiphaugh is vested with the dignity of heritable Sheriff of Ettrick Forest, an office held by his descendants till the final abolition of such jurisdictions.”—Scott.

JOHNIE ARMSTRONG

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. In pursuance of his aim to make the "rush-bush keep the cow", James V, in the summer of 1530, made an incursion into the Borderland. Either upon summons or voluntarily, Johnie Armstrong of Gilnockie (near Langholm), with a number of his men, presented himself before His Majesty as he lay at Caerlanrig, in Upper Teviotdale. The ballad tells graphically the outcome of the meeting. It was Armstrong's boast that: "Ne'er a Scots wyfe could have said, that e'er I skaith'd her a puir flee".]

Sum speikis of lords, sum speikis of lairds,
And sic lyke men of hie degrie;
Of a gentleman I sing a sang,
Sum tyme called Laird of Gilnockie.

The king he wrytes a luving letter,
With his ain hand sae tenderly,
And he hath sent it to Johnie Armstrang,
To cum and speik with him speedily.

The Eliots and Armstrangs did convene;
They were a gallant cumpanie:
"We'll ride and meit our lawful king,
And bring him safe to Gilnockie.

"Make kinnen ¹ and capon ready, then,
And venison in great plentie;
We'll wellcome hame our royal king;
I hope he'll dine at Gilnockie!"

They ran their horse on the Langholme howm,
And brak their spears wi' nickle main;
The ladies lukit frae their loft-windows—
"God bring our men weel hame agen!"

¹ Rabbits.

When Johnie cam before the king,
Wi' a' his men sae brave to see,
The king he movit his bonnet to him;
He ween'd he was a king as weel as he.

“ May I find grace, my sovereign liege,
Grace for my loyal men and me?
For my name it is Johnie Armstrang,
And a subject of yours, my liege,” said he.

“ Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o' my sight soon mayst thou be!
I grantit never a traitor's life,
And now I 'll not begin wi' thee.”—

“ Grant me my life, my liege, my king,
And a bonny gift I 'll gie to thee;—
Full four-and-twenty milk-white steids,
Were a' foaled in ae yeir to me.

“ I 'll gie thee a' these milk-white steids,
That prance and nicker at a speir;
And as mikle gude Inglis gilt,
As four o' their braid backs dow bear.”—

“ Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o' my sight soon mayst thou be!
I grantit never a traitor's life,
And now I 'll not begin wi' thee.”—

“ Grant me my life, my liege, my king,
And a bonny gift I 'll gie to thee;
Gude four-and-twenty ganging mills,
That gang thro' a' the yeir to me.

“ These four-and-twenty mills complete
Sall gang for thee thro’ a’ the yeir;
And as mickle of gude reid wheat,
As a’ their happens dow to bear.”—

“ Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o’ my sight soon mayst thou be!
I grantit never a traitor’s life,
And now I ’ll not begin wi’ thee.”—

“ Grant me my life, my liege, my king!
And a great great gift I ’ll gie to thee;
Bauld four-and-twenty sisters’ sons,
Sall for thee fecht, tho’ a’ should flee!”—

“ Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o’ my sight soon mayst thou be!
I grantit never a traitor’s life,
And now I ’ll not begin wi’ thee.”—

“ Grant me my life, my liege, my king!
And a brave gift I ’ll gie to thee;
All between heir and Newcastle town
Sall pay their yeirly rent to thee.”—

“ Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o’ my sight soon mayst thou be!
I grantit never a traitor’s life,
And now I ’ll not begin wi’ thee.”—

“ Ye lied, ye lied, now, king,” he says,
“ Altho’ a King and Prince ye be!
For I ’ve luved naething in my life,
I weel dare say it, but honesty.

“ Save a fat horse, and a fair woman,
 Twa bonny dogs to kill a deir:
 But England suld have found me meal and mault,
 Gif I had lived this hundred yeir!

“ She suld have found me meal and mault,
 And beef and mutton in a’ plentie;
 But ne’er a Scots wyfe could have said,
 That e’er I skaith’d her a pair flee.

“ To seik het water beneith cauld ice,
 Surely it is a great folie;—
 I have asked grace at a graceless face,
 But there is nane for my men and me!

“ But had I kenn’d ere I cam frae hame,
 How unkind thou wadst been to me,
 I wad have keepit the Border side,
 In spite of all thy force and thee.

“ Wist England’s king that I was ta’en,
 O what a blythe man he wad be!
 For anes I slew his¹ sister’s son,
 And on his breist bane brak a trie.”

John wore a girdle about his middle,
 Imbroider’d owre wi’ burning gold,
 Bespangled wi’ the same metal,
 Maist beautiful ’t was to behold.

There hang nine targats² at Johnie’s hat,
 And ilk ane worth three hundred pound:
 “ What wants that knave that a king suld have
 But the sword of honour and the crown?

¹ A poetic licence.

² Tassels.

“ O where got thou these targats, Johnie,
That blink sae brawly abune thy brie?”—

“ I gat them in the field fechting,
Where, cruel king, thou durst na be.

“ Had I my horse, and harness gude,
And riding as I wont to be,
It suld have been tauld this hundred yeir,
The meeting of my King and me!

“ God be with thee, Kirsty, my brother,
Lang live thou Laird of Mangertoun! ¹
Lang mayst thou live on the Border syde,
Ere thou see thy brother ride up and down!

“ And God be with thee, Kirsty, ² my son,
Where thou sits on thy nurse's knee!
But an thou live this hundred yeir,
Thy father's better thou 'lt never be.

“ Farewell! my bonny Gilnock hall,
Where on Esk side thou standest stout!
Gif I had lived but seven yeirs mair,
I wad hae gilt thee round about.”

John murdered was at Carlinrigg,
And all his gallant companie;
But Scotland's heart was ne'er sae wae,
To see sae mony brave men die.

Because they saved their country deir
Frae Englishmen! Nane were sa bauld,
Whyle Johnie lived on the Border syde,
Nane of them durst cum neir his hauld.

¹ Probably his brother.

² Christopher.

JAMIE TELFER OF THE FAIR DODHEAD

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. There are two ballads with the same name. In the other story it is not Scott who goes to the rescue, but the Elliots of Liddesdale. Sir Walter Scott suggests that both the Scotts and the Elliots may have been engaged, and then quarrelled over the honours. The locality of "the fair Dodhead" is doubtful.]

It fell about the Martinmas tyde,
 When our Border steeds ¹ get corn and hay,
 The Captain of Bewcastle ² hath bound him to ryde,
 And he 's ower to Tividale ³ to drive a prey.

The first ae guide that they met wi',
 It was high up in Hardhaughswire; ⁴
 The second guide that they met wi',
 It was laigh down in Borthwick ⁵ water.

"What tidings, what tidings, my trusty guide?"—
 "Nae tidings, nae tidings, I hae to thee;
 But gin ye 'll gae to the fair Dodhead, ⁶
 Mony a cow's cauf I 'll let thee see."—

And when they cam to the fair Dodhead,
 Right hastily they clam the peel;
 They loosed the kye out, ane and a',
 And ranshacked ⁷ the house right weel.

Now Jamie Telfer's heart was sair,
 The tear aye rowing in his ee;
 He pled wi' the Captain to hae his gear,
 Or else revenged he wad be.

¹ Farmhouses.

² In Cumberland.

³ Teviotdale.

⁴ Pass between Liddesdale and Teviotdale.

⁵ Joins the Teviot three miles above Hawick.

⁶ Doubtful. Scott says near Singlee in Selkirkshire.

⁷ Ransacked.

The Captain turned him round and leugh;
Said, "Man, there's naething in thy house,
But ae auld sword without a sheath,
That hardly now would fell a mouse."—

The sun wasna up, but the moon was down,
It was the gryming ¹ of a new-fa'n snaw,
Jamie Telfer has run ten myles a-foot,
Between the Dodhead and the Stobs's ² Ha'.

And when he cam to the fair tower yett,
He shouted loud, and cried weel hie,
Till out bespak auld Gibby Elliot—
"Whae 's this that bring's the fray to me?"

"It 's I, Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead,
And a harried man I think I be!
Thae 's naething left at the fair Dodhead,
But a waefu' wife and bairnies three."

"Gae seek your succour at Branksome ³ Ha'.
For succour ye 'se get nane frae me!
Gae seek your succour where ye paid black-mail,⁴
For, man, ye ne'er paid money to me."—

Jamie he 's turned him round about,
I wat the tear blinded his ee,
"I 'll ne'er pay mail to Elliot again,
And the fair Dodhead I 'll never see!

"My hounds may a' rin masterless,
My hawks may fly frae tree to tree,
My lord may grip my vassal lands,
For there again maun I never be!"—

¹ Sprinkling.

² Four miles south of Hawick.

³ On the Teviot, above Hawick.

⁴ Protection money.

He has turned him to the Tiviot side,
 E'en as fast as he could gie,¹
 Till he cam to the Coultart Cleugh,²
 And there he shouted baith loud and hie.

Then up bespak him auld Jock Grieve—
 “ Whae 's this that brings the fraye to me?”—
 “ It 's I, Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead,
 A harried man I trow I be.

“ There 's naething left in the fair Dodhead,
 But a greeting wife and bairnies three,
 And sax poor ca's³ stand in the sta',⁴
 A' routing loud for their minnie⁵.”—

“ Alack—a wae!” quo' auld Jock Grieve,
 “ Alack! my heart is sair for thee!
 For I was married on the eldest sister,
 And you on the youngest o' the three.”

Then he has ta'en out a bonny black,
 Was right weel fed with corn and hay,
 And he 's set Jamie Telfer on his back,
 To the Catslockhill⁶ to tak the fraye.

And whan he cam to the Catslockhill,
 He shouted loud, and cried weel hie,
 Till out and spak him William's Wat—
 “ O whae 's this brings the fraye to me?”—

“ It 's I, Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead,
 A harried man I think I be!

¹ Go.

² Nearly opposite Caerlanrig on road between Hawick and Langholm.

³ Calves.

⁴ Stall.

⁵ Calling loudly for their mothers.

⁶ South of the Borthwick (?).

The Captain of Bewcastle has driven my gear
For God's sake rise, and succour me!"—

"Alack, for wae!" quoth William's Wat,
"Alack, for thee my heart is sair!
I never cam by the fair Dodhead,
That ever I fand thy basket bare."—

He 's set his twa sons on coal-black steeds,
Himsell upon a freckled gray,
And they are on wi' Jamie 'Telfer,
To Branksome Ha' to tak the fraye.

And when they cam to Branksome Ha',
They shouted a' baith loud and hie,
Till up and spak him auld Buccleuch,
Said—"Whae 's this brings the fraye to me?"

"It 's I, Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead,
And a harried man I think I be!
There 's nought left in the fair Dodhead,
But a greeting wife and bairnies three."—

"Alack, for wae!" quoth the gude auld lord,
"And ever my heart is wae for thee."
But fye gar cry on Willie, my son,
And see that he come to me speedilie!

"Gar warn the water,¹ braid and wide
Gar warn it sune and hastilie!
They that winna ride for 'Telfer's kye,
Let them never look in the face o' me!

¹ Teviotdale.

“ Warn Wat o’ Harden, and his sons,
 Wi’ them will Borthwick Water ride;
 Warn Gaudilands, and Allanhaugh,
 And Gilmanscleugh, and Commonsides.¹

“ Ride by the gate at Priestthaughswire,²
 And warn the Currors o’ the Lee;
 As ye cum down the Hermitage Slack,
 Warn doughty Willie o’ Gorrinberry.”—

The Scotts they rade, the Scotts they ran,
 Sae starkly and sae steadilie!
 And aye the ower-word ³ o’ the thrang
 Was—“ Rise for Branksome readilie!”

The gear was driven the Frostylee ⁴ up,
 Frae the Frostylee unto the plain,
 Whan Willie has look’d his men before,
 And saw the kye right fast drivand.

“ Whae drives thir kye?” ’gan Willie say,
 “ To make an outspeckle ⁵ o’ me?”—
 “ It ’s I, the Captain o’ Bewcastle, Willie;
 I winna layne ⁶ my name for thee.”—

“ O will ye let Telfer’s kye gae back?
 Or will ye do aught for regard o’ me?
 Or, by the faith of my body,” quo’ Willie Scott,
 “ I ’se ware my dame’s cauf skin ⁷ on thee!”

¹ Estates belonging to families of the name Scott, in Borthwick and Teviot.

² Pursuers went south through hills of Liddesdale to meet the raiders as they crossed the Liddel.

³ Call.

⁴ Joins the Teviot near Moss-paul.

⁵ Laughing-stock.

⁶ Hide, conceal. ⁷ Wear out my riding-boots (in kicking) on you.

“ I winna let the kye gae back,
Neither for thy love, nor yet thy fear;
But I will drive Jamie Telfer's kye,
In spite of every Scott that 's here.”—

“ Set on them, lads!” quo' Willie than;
“ Fye, lads, set on them cruellie!
For ere they win to the Ritterford,¹
Mony a toom ² saddle there sall be!”

Then til 't they gaed, wi' heart and hand,
The blows fell thick as bickering hail;
And mony a horse ran masterless,
And mony a comely cheek was pale.

But Willie was stricken ower the head,
And thro' the knapsap ³ the sword has gane;
And Harden grat for every rage,
When Willie on the grund lay slane.

But he 's ta'en aff his gude steel cap,
And thrice he 's waved it in the air—
The Dinlay ⁴ snaw was ne'er mair white
Nor the lyart ⁵ locks of Harden's hair.

“ Revenge! revenge!” auld Wat 'gan cry;
“ Fye, lads, lay on them cruellie!
We 'll ne'er see Tiviot-side again,
Or Willie's death revenged sall be.”—

O mony a horse ran masterless,
The splinter'd lances flew on hie;
But or they wan to the Kershope ⁶ ford,
The Scotts had gotten the victory.

¹ Ford on the Liddel.

² Empty.

³ Headpiece.

⁴ A mountain in Liddesdale.

⁵ Grey.

⁶ On the Liddel.

John o' Brigham ¹ there was slane,
 And John o' Barlow,¹ as I heard say;
 And thirty mae o' the Captain's men
 Lay bleeding on the grund that day.

The Captain was run through the thick of the thigh
 And broken was his right leg bane;
 If he had lived this hundred years,
 He had never been loved by woman again.

"Hae back the kye!" the Captain said;
 "Dear kye, I trow, to some they be!
 For gin I suld live a hundred years,
 There will ne'er fair lady smile on me."—

Then word is gane to the Captain's bride,
 Even in the bower where that she lay,
 That her lord was prisoner in enemy's land,
 Since into Tividale he had led the way.

"I wad lour'd ² have had a winding-sheet,
 And helped to put it ower his head,
 Ere he had been disgraced by the Border Scott,
 Whan he ower Riddel his men did lead!"—

There was a wild gallant amang us a',
 His name was Watty wi' the Wudspurs,³
 Cried—"On for his house in Stanegirthside,⁴
 If ony man will ride with us!"

When they cam to the Stanegirthside,
 They dang ⁵ wi' trees, and burst the door;
 They loosed out a' the Captain's kye,
 And set them forth car lads before.

¹ Cumberland families.

² Rather.

³ Mad spurs.

⁴ On English side of the Liddel.

⁵ I.e. as battering-rams.

There was an auld wyfe ayont the fire,
 A wee bit o' the Captain's kin—
 "Whae dar loose out the Captain's kye,
 Or answer to him and his men?"—

"It's I, Watty Wudspurs, loose the kye,
 I winna layne my name frae thee!
 And I will loose out the Captain's kye,
 In scorn of a' his men and he."—

Whan they cam to the fair Dodhead,
 They were a wellcum sight to see!
 For instead of his ain ten milk kye,
 Jamie Telfer has gotten thirty and three!

And he has paid the rescue shot,¹
 Baith wi' goud and white monie;²
 And at the burial o' Willie Scott,
 I wat was mony a weeping ee.

KINMONT WILLIE

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This masterly exploit of Sir Walter Scott of Branxholm, Laird of Buccleuch, which took place on the night of the 13th April, 1596, was long talked of over Britain and the Continent. It is possible that the compiler of *The Minstrelsy* wrote more of "Kinmont Willie" than he collected. Willie of Kinmont was an Armstrong "against whom the English had a quarrel for many wrongs he committed, as he was indeed a notorious thief".]

O have ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde? ³
 O have ye na heard o' the keen Lord Scroope? ⁴
 How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
 On Hairibee ⁵ to hang him up?

¹ Expense. ² In gold and silver. ³ Deputy to Lord Scroope.

⁴ Warden of the Western Marches (English).

⁵ Place of execution at Carlisle.

Had Willie had but twenty men
 But twenty men as stout as he,
 Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
 Wi' eight score in his companie.

They band his legs beneath the steed,
 They tied his hands behind his back;
 They guarded him, fivesome on each side,
 And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.¹

They led him thro' the Liddel-rack,
 And also thro' the Carlisle sands;
 They brought him on to Carlisle castle,
 To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.

" My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
 And wha will dare this deed avow?
 Or answer by the Border law?
 Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?"

" Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!
 There 's never a Scot shall set ye free:
 Before ye cross my castle yett,²
 I trow ye shall take farewell o' me."

" Fear na ye that, my lord," quo' Willie:
 " By the faith o' my body, Lord Scroope," he said,
 " I never yet lodged in a hostelrie,³
 But I paid my lawing ⁴ before I gaed."

Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,⁵
 In Branksome Ha',⁶ where that he lay,

¹ Ford on the Liddel. ² Gate. ³ Inn. ⁴ Reckoning.

⁵ I.e. Buccleuch, who was Warden of the West Scottish March.

⁶ On the Teviot.

That Lord Scroope has ta'en the Kinmont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
He garr'd the red wine spring on hie—
“ Now Christ's curse on my head,” he said,
“ But avengèd of Lord Scroope I 'll be!

“ O is my basnet ¹ a widow's curch? ²
Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree?
Or my arm a lady's lilye hand,
That an English lord should lightly ³ me!

“ And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of Border tide?
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Is Keeper here on the Scottish side?

“ And have they e'en ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear?
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

“ O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none,
I would slight Carlisle castell high,
Tho' it were builded of marble stone.

“ I would set that castle in a lowe,⁴
And sloken ⁵ it with English blood!
There 's nevir a man in Cumberland
Should ken where Carlisle castell stood.

¹ Helmet.

² Coif.

³ Belittle.

⁴ Flame.

⁵ Put out the fire, lit. quench its thirst.

“ But since nae war ’s between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be;
I ’ll neither harm English lad nor lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!”

He has call’d him forty marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot,¹ call’d
The laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

He has call’d him forty marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch;
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,²
And gloves of green, and feathers blue.

There were five and five before them a’,
Wi’ hunting-horns and bugles bright;
And five and five came wi’ Buccleuch,
Like warden’s men, arrayed for fight.

And five and five, like a mason gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five, like broken men;
And so they reached the Woodhouselee.³

And as we cross’d the Bateable⁴ Land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o’ men that we met wi’,
Whae should it be but fause Sakelde?

¹ The Gibby of the previous ballad.

² Armour on shoulders.

³ House on the Border belonging to Buccleuch.

⁴ A sort of “no man’s land”, the “debateable land” between Sark and Longtown.

“ Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?”
 Quo’ fause Sakelde; “ come tell to me!”
 “ We go to hunt an English stag,
 Has trespass’d on the Scots countrie.”

“ Where be ye gaun, ye marshal men?”
 Quo’ fause Sakelde; “ come tell me true!”
 “ We go to catch a rank reiver,
 Has broken faith wi’ the bauld Buccleuch.”

“ Where are ye gaun, ye mason lads,
 Wi’ a’ your ladders lang and hie?”
 “ We gang to herry ¹ a corbie’s ² nest,
 That wons ³ not far frae Woodhouselee.”

“ Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?”
 Quo’ fause Sakelde; “ come tell to me!”
 Now Dickie of Dryhope ⁴ led that band,
 And the never a word o’ lear had he.

“ Why trespass ye on the English side?
 Row-footed ⁵ outlaws, stand!” quo’ he;
 The never a word had Dickie to say,
 Sae he thrust the lance through his fause bodie.

Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
 And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we cross’d;
 The water was great and meikle of spait,⁶
 But the never a horse nor man we lost.

And when we reach’d the Staneshaw-bank,
 The wind was rising loud and hie;
 And there the laird garr’d leave our steeds,
 For fear that they should stamp and nie.⁷

¹ Rob.² Crow’s.³ Has its place.⁴ In Yarrow.⁵ Rough-footed.⁶ Flood.⁷ Neigh.

And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
 The wind began full loud to blaw;
 But 't was wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
 When we came beneath the castle wa'.

We crept on knees, and held our breath,
 Till we placed the ladders against the wa';
 And sac ready was Buccleuch himsell
 To mount the first, before us a'.

He has ta'en the watchman by the throat,
 He flung him down upon the lead:—
 "Had there not been peace between our lands,
 Upon the other side thou had'st gaed!

"Now sound out, trumpets!" quo' Buccleuch;
 "Let's waken Lord Scroope right merrilie!"
 Then loud the warden's trumpet blew—
 "*O wha dare meddle wi' me?*"

Then speedilie to work we gaed,
 And raised the slogan ane and a',
 And cut a hole thro' a sheet of lead,
 And so we wan to the castle ha'.

They thought King James and a' his men
 Had won the house wi' bow and spear,
 It was but twenty Scots and ten,
 That put a thousand in sic a steer! ¹

Wi' coulters, and wi' fore-hammers,
 We garr'd the bars bang merrilie,
 Until we cam' to the inner prison,
 Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.

¹ Uproar, disorder.

And when we cam' to the lower prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie—
“ O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou 's to die?”

“ O I sleep saft, and I wake aft;
It 's lang since sleeping was fley'd ¹ frae me;
Gie my service back to my wife and bairns,
And a' gude fellows that speir ² for me.”

Then Red Rowan has hente ³ him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale—
“ Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scroope I take farewell.

“ Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!
My gude Lord Scroope, farewell!” he cried—
“ I 'll pay you for my lodging maill,⁴
When first we meet on the Border side.”

Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's airns ⁵ played clang!

“ O mony a time,” quo' Kinmont Willie,
“ I have ridden a horse baith wild and wode;
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan,
I ween my legs hae ne'er bestrode.

“ And mony a time,” quo' Kinmont Willie,
“ I 've pricked a horse out oure the furs;⁶
But since the day I backed a steed,
I never wore sic cumbrous spurs!”⁷

¹ Frightened.² Ask.³ Taken.⁴ Expenses.⁵ Irons.⁶ Furrows.⁷ I.e. his fetters.

We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, on horse and foot,
Cam' wi' the keen Lord Scroope alang.

Buccleuch has turned to Eden water,
Even where it flow'd frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam them thro' the stream.

He turned him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he—
“ If ye like na my visit in merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!”

All sore astonished stood Lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trow ¹ his eyes,
When thro' the water they had gane.

“ He is either himsel' a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wadna have ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie.”

¹ Believe.

THE DOWIE DENS OF YARROW

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Sir Walter Scott says a duel took place near the Deuchar Swire, not far from Yarrow Kirk, between John Scott of Tushielaw and his brother-in-law, William Scott, third son of Robert Scott of Thirlestane, Ettrick, in which the latter was slain. The dispute seems to have been about some land to be conveyed by the laird of Tushielaw to his daughter as a marriage portion. A stone near Whitehope Burn, known as the "Warrior's Rest", is said to mark the scene of the tragedy. There are other "foundations".]

Late at e'en, drinking the wine,
And ere they paid the lawing,¹
They set a combat them between,
To fight it in the dawning.²

"O stay at hame, my noble lord,
O stay at hame, my marrow!³
My cruel brother will you betray
On the dowie houms⁴ of Yarrow."—

"O fare ye weel, my ladye gaye!
O fare ye weel, my Sarah!
For I maun gae, though I ne'er return
Frae the dowie⁵ banks o' Yarrow."

She kiss'd his cheek, she kaim'd⁶ his hair
As oft she had before, O;
She belted him with his noble brand,
And he's away to Yarrow.

O he's gane up yon high high hill⁷—
I wat he gaed wi' sorrow,
An' in a den spied nine arm'd men,
In the dowie houms of Yarrow.

¹ Reckoning. ² Dawing—dawn. ³ Mate, husband. ⁴ Doleful flats.
⁵ Sad, mournful. ⁶ Combed. ⁷ Below Yarrow Kirk.

“ O come ye here to part your land,
The bonnie Forest thorough?
Or come ye here to wield your brand,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow?”

“ I come not here to part my land,
Come neither to beg nor borrow;
I come to wield my noble brand,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

“ If I see all, ye ’re nine to ane;
And that ’s an unequal marrow;
Yet will I fight, while lasts my brand,
On the bonnie banks of Yarrow.”

Four he hurt, and five he slew,
On the dowie houms o’ Yarrow,
Till that stubborn knight came him behind,
And ran his body thorough.

“ Gae hame, gae hame, good-brother ¹ John,
And tell your sister Sarah,
To come and lift her leafu’ lord
Who ’s sleepin’ sound on Yarrow.”—

“ Yestreen I dream’d a dolefu’ dream;
I fear there will be sorrow!
I dream’d I pu’d the heather green,
Wi’ my true love on Yarrow.

“ O gentle wind, that bloweth south,
From where my love repaireth,
Convey a kiss from his dear mouth,
And tell me how he fareth.

¹ Beau-frère, brother-in-law.

“ But in the glen strive armed men;
They ’ve wrought me dule and sorrow;
For they the comeliest knight have slain—
He bleeding lies on Yarrow.”

As she sped down yon high high hill,
She gaed wi’ dule and sorrow,
And in the den spied ten slain men,
On the dowie banks of Yarrow.

She kissed his cheek, she kaim’d his hair,
She searched his wounds all thorough,
She kiss’d them, till her lips grew red,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

“ Now haud your tongue, my daughter dear,
For a’ this breeds but sorrow;
I ’ll wed ye to a better lord,
Than him ye lost on Yarrow.”—

“ O haud your tongue, my father dear!
An dinna grieve your Sarah;
A better lord was never born
Than him I lost on Yarrow.

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The scene of the tragedy is the Douglas Burn, which flows into the Yarrow, a little below St. Mary’s Loch, Selkirkshire.]

“ Rise up, rise up now, Lord Douglas,” she says,
“ And put on your armour so bright;
Let it never be said that a daughter of thine
Was married to a lord under night.

“ Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
And put on your armour so bright,
And take better care of your youngest sister,
For your eldest 's awa' the last night.”—

He 's mounted her on a milk-white steed
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And lightly they rade away.

Lord William lookit o'er his left shoulder,
To see what he could see,
And there he spy'd her seven brethren bold,
Come riding o'er the lee.

“ Light down, light down, Lady Marg'ret,” he said,
“ And hold my steed in your hand,
Until that against your seven brethren bold,
And your father, I make a stand.”—

She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
And never shed one tear,
Until she saw her seven brethren fa',
And her father hard fighting, who loved her so dear.

“ O hold your hand, Lord William!” she said,
“ For your strokes they are wondrous sair;
True lovers I can get many a ane,
But a father I can never get mair.”—

O, she 's ta'en out her handkerchief,
It was o' the holland sae fine,
And aye she dighted ¹ her father's bloody wounds,
That were redder than the wine.

¹ Wiped.

“ O chuse, O chuse, Lady Marg’ret,” he said,
“ O whether will ye gang or bide?”—
“ I ’ll gang, I ’ll gang, Lord William,” she said,
“ For you have left me no other guide.”—

He ’s lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And slowly they baith rade away.

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a’ by the light of the moon,
Until they came to yon wan water,¹
And there they lighted down.

They lighted down to tak a drink
Of the spring that ran sae clear;
And down the stream ran his gude heart’s blood,
And sair she ’gan to fear.

“ Hold up, hold up, Lord William,” she says,
“ For I fear that you are slain!”—
“ ’Tis naething but the shadow of my scarlet cloak,
That shines in the water sae plain.”—

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a’ by the light of the moon,
Until they cam to his mother’s ha’ door,
And there they lighted down.

“ Get up, get up, lady mother,” he says,
“ Get up and let me in!—
Get up, get up, lady mother,” he says,
“ For this night my fair lady I ’ve win.

¹ Douglas Burn?

“ O mak my bed, lady mother,” he says,
“ O mak it braid and deep!
And lay Lady Marg’ret close at my back
And the sounder I will sleep.”—

Lord William was dead lang ere midnight,
Lady Marg’ret lang ere day—
And all true lovers that go thegither
May they have mair luck than they!

Lord William was buried in St. Marie’s ¹ kirk,
Lady Marg’ret in Marie’s quire;
Out o’ the lady’s grave grew a bonny red rose
And out o’ the knight’s a brier.

And they twa met, and they twa plat,
And fain they wad be near;
And a’ the world might ken right weel,
They were twa lovers dear.

But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough!
For he pull’d up the bonny brier,
And flang ’t in St. Marie’s Loch.

¹ At St. Mary’s Loch, Selkirkshire.

THE LAMENT OF THE BORDER WIDOW

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. In the spring of 1530 James V made a "raid" into the Ettrick and Yarrow districts to make an example of certain notorious Border reivers. One of these, William Cockburne of Henderland, was seized and carried off to Edinburgh, where he was convicted, on the 16th May, 1530, of high treason, and beheaded. Local tradition erroneously tells of Cockburne's being hanged over his own gate.]

My love he built me a bonny bower,
And clad it a' wi' lilye flour,
A brawer bower ye ne'er did see,
Than my true love he built for me.

There came a man, by middle day,
He spied his sport, and went away;
And brought the king that very night,
Who brake my bower, and slew my knight.

He slew my knight, to me sae dear;
He slew my knight, and poin'd ¹ his gear;
My servants all for life did flee,
And left me in extremitie.

I sew'd his sheet, making my mane;
I watch'd the corpse, myself alane;
I watch'd his body, night and day;
No living creature came that way.

I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed, and whiles I sat;
I digg'd a grave, and laid him in,
And happ'd him with the sod sae green.

¹ Seized; Cockburne's estate was forfeited.

But think na ye my heart was sair,
 When I laid the moul' ¹ on his yellow hair;
 O think na ye my heart was wae,
 When I turn'd about, away to gae?

Nae living man I 'll love again,
 Since that my lovely knight is slain,
 Wi' ae lock of his yellow hair
 I 'll chain my heart for evermair.

DROWNED IN YARROW

[Child's version, No. 2015.]

Willy 's rare, and Willy 's fair,
 And Willy 's wondrous bonny;
 And Willy hecht ² to marry me
 Gin e'er he married ony.

Yestreen I made my bed fu' braid,
 This night I 'll make it narrow;
 For a' the live-lang winter night
 I lie twin'd ³ of my marrow.⁴

O came you by yon water-side,
 Pu'd ⁵ you the rose or lily?
 Or came you by yon meadow green?
 Or saw you my sweet Willy?

She sought him east, she sought him west,
 She sought him braid and narrow;
 Syne in the cleaving of a craig
 She found him drown'd in Yarrow.

¹ Mould. ² Promised. ³ Bereft. ⁴ Mate. ⁵ Pulled.

THE TWA CORBIES

[From *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.]

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane: ¹
The tane ² unto t' other say,
“ Whar sall we gang and dine to-day?”

“ In behint yon auld fail ³ dyke,
I wot there lies a new-slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there
But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.

“ His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady 's ta'en another mate,
So we may make our dinner sweet.

“ Ye 'll set on his white hause-bane, ⁴
And I 'll pike ⁵ out his bonny blue een;
Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair
We 'll theek ⁶ our nest when it grows bare.

“ Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken whar he is gane,
O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.”

¹ Two crows complaining.

² One.

³ Turf wall.

⁴ Collar-bone.

⁵ Pick.

⁶ Thatch.

FAIR HELEN

[Palgrave's version, *The Golden Treasury*. Some authorities believe that John Pinkerton wrote this beautiful ballad; if so, he did excellently. In *The Minstrelsy*, Scott gives a full account of its supposed origin.]

I wish I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies
On fair Kirconnell lea!

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen ¹ dropt,
And died to succour me!

O think na but my heart was sair
When my love dropt down and spak nae mair!
I laid her down wi' meikle care
On fair Kirconnell lea.

As I went down the water-side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirconnell lea;

I lighted down my sword to draw,
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

O Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll make a garland of thy hair
Shall bind my heart for evermair
Until the day I die.

¹ Maid Helen.

O that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, "Haste and come to me!"

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee, I were blest,
Where thou lies low and takes thy rest
On fair Kirconnell lea.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding-sheet drawn over my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirconnell lea.

I wish I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries;
And I am weary of the skies;
Since my love died for me.

OUR GUDEMAN

[Herd's version.]

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
An' hame cam he;
An' there he saw a saddle horse,
Whaur nae horse should be.
"O how cam this horse here?
How can this be?
How cam this horse here,
Without the leave o' me?"
"A horse!" quo' she;
"Ay, a horse," quo' he.
"Ye auld blin' doited carle,¹

¹ Fellow.

Blinder mat ¹ ye be!
 "T is naething but a milk cow
 My minnie ² sent to me."
 " A milk cow!" quo' he;
 " Ay, a milk cow," quo' she.
 " Far hae I ridden,
 An' meikle hae I seen,
 But a saddle on a cow's back
 Saw I never nane!"

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
 An' hame cam he;
 He spy'd a pair o' jack-boots
 Whaur nae boots should be.
 " What 's this now, gudewife?
 What 's this I see?
 How cam these boots here,
 Without the leave o' me?"
 " Boots!" quo' she;
 " Ay, boots," quo' he.
 " Ye auld blin' dotard carle,
 An' ill mat ye see;
 It 's but a pair o' water-stoups
 The cooper sent to me."
 " Water-stoups!" quo' he;
 " Ay, water-stoups," quo' she.
 " Far hae I ridden,
 An' far'er hae I gane,
 But siller ³ spurs on water-stoups
 Saw I never nane!"

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
 An' hame cam he;

¹ May.² Mother.³ Silver.

An' there he saw a sword
 Whaur nae sword should be.
 "What 's this now, gudewife?
 What 's this I see?
 O how cam this sword here,
 Without the leave o' me?"
 "A sword!" quo' she;
 "Ay, a sword," quo' he.
 "Ye auld blin' dotard carle,
 An' ill mat ye see;
 It 's but a parritch spurtle ¹
 My minnie sent to me."
 "A spurtle!" quo' he,
 "Ay, a spurtle," quo' she.
 "Weel—far hae I ridden,
 An' meikle hae I seen,
 But siller-handled spurtles
 Saw I never nane!"

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
 An' hame cam he;
 There he spy'd a pouter'd ² wig
 Whaur nae wig should be.
 "What 's this now, gudewife?
 What 's this I see?
 How cam this wig here
 Without the leave o' me?"
 "A wig!" quo' she;
 "Ay, a wig," quo' he.
 "Ye auld blin' dotard carle,
 An' ill mat ye see;
 'T is naething but a clocken ³ hen

¹ Porridge stick.
 (D 638)

² Powdered.

³ Brooding, sitting.
 D 2

My minnie sent to me."
" A clocken hen!" quo' he;
" Ay, a clocken hen," quo' she.
" Far hae I ridden,
An' meikle hae I seen,
But pouthar on a clocken hen
Saw I never nane!"

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
An' hame cam he;
An' there he saw a riding coat,
Whaur nae coat should be.
" O how cam this coat here?
How can this be?
How cam this coat here,
Without the leave o' me?"
" A coat!" quo' she;
" Ay, a coat," quo' he.
" Ye auld blin' dotard carle,
Blinder mat ye be;
It 's but a pair o' blankets
My minnie sent to me."
" Blankets!" quo' he;
" Ay, blankets," quo' she.
" Far hae I ridden,
An' meikle hae I seen,
But buttons upon blankets
Saw I never nane!"

Ben ¹ went our gudeman,
An' ben went he;
An' there he spy'd a sturdy man,
Whaur nae man should be.

¹ Through the house.

"How cam this man here?
 How can this be?
 How cam this man here,
 Without the leave o' me?"
 "A man!" quo' she;
 "Ay, a man," quo' he.
 "Puir blin' body
 An' blinder mat ye be;
 It's a new milkin' maid
 My mither sent to me."
 "A maid!" quo' he;
 "Ay, a maid," quo' she.
 "Far hae I ridden
 An' meikle hae I seen,
 But lang-bearded milkin' maids
 Saw I never nanel!"

THE SOUTERS O' SELKIRK

[From *The Minstrelsy*. These verses are of doubtful origin, but are supposed to have reference to the Battle of Flodden. Yellow and green were the liveries of the house of Home. See "J. B. Selkirk's" "Selkirk after Flodden".]

Up wi' the Souters ¹ o' Selkirk,
 And down wi' the Earl of Home;
 And up wi' a' the braw lads
 Wha sew the single-soled shoon! ²
 O! fye upon yellow and yellow,
 And fye upon yellow and green;
 But up wi' the true blue and scarlet,
 And up wi' the single-soled shoon!

¹ Shoemakers.

² Selkirk was famous at one time for shoes.

Up wi' the Souters o' Selkirk—
 Up wi' the lingle ¹ and last!
 There 's fame wi' the days that 's comin',
 And glory wi' them that are past:
 Up wi' the Souters o' Selkirk—
 Lads that are trusty and leal;
 And up wi' the men of the Forest,
 And down wi' the Merse ² to the Deil!

O! mitres are made for noddles,
 But feet they are made for shoon:
 And fame is as sib ³ to Selkirk
 As light is true to the mune.
 There sits a souter in Selkirk
 Wha sings as he draws his thread—
 There 's gallant Souters in Selkirk
 As lang 's there 's water in Tweed.

AGANIS THE THIEVIS OF LIDDISDALE

SIR RICHARD MAITLAND

(1496-1586)

[Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington (Lennoxlove), near Haddington, was the father of the more famous Secretary Lethington. After becoming blind he made a very valuable MS. collection of early Scottish poems, his daughter serving as amanuensis.]

Of Liddisdale the common thiefs,
 Sa pertlie stealis now and reifis,
 That nane may keep
 Horse, nolt,⁴ nor sheep,
 Nor yit dar sleep
 For their mischiefis.

¹ Shoemaker's thread.

² Men of Berwickshire.

³ Kin.

⁴ Cattle.

They plainlie throu the countrie ridis;
I trow the meikle devil them guidis;

Where they onset
Ay in their gate ¹
There is na yett ²
Nor door them bidis.³

They leif ⁴ richt nocht; wherever they gae
There can na thing be hid them frae;

For, gif men wald
Their houses hald,
Than wax they bauld
To burn and slay.

Thae thiefis have nearhand herreit ⁵ haill
Ettrick Forest and Lauderdale;

Now are they gane
In Lothiane,
And sparis nane
That they will wale.⁶

Thae landis are with stouth as socht,⁷
To extreme povertie are brocht;

Thae wicked shrewis ⁸
Has laid the plowis,⁹
That nane or few is
That are left oucht.¹⁰

By common taking of black-mail,
They that had flesh and bread and ale,

¹ Way. ² Gate. ³ Keeps them out. ⁴ Just leave nothing.

⁵ Harried. ⁶ Choose. ⁷ Visited with robbery. ⁸ Evil people.

⁹ Have made the plough useless. ¹⁰ Anything.

Now are sa wraikit,¹
 Made puir and nakit,
 Fain to be slaikit ²
 With water-kail.

'Thae thiefs that stealis and tursis ³ hame,
 Ilk ane of them has ane to-name: ⁴
 Will of the Lawis,
 Hab of the Shawis;
 To mak bare wa' is.
 They think na shame.

'They spuilie ⁵ puir men of their packis;
 They leif them nocht on bed nor backis;
 Baith hen and cock,
 With reel and rock,⁶
 The Lairdis Jock,
 All with him takis.

They leif not spindle, spoon, nor spit,
 Bed, bowster,⁷ blanket, serk,⁸ nor sheet:
 John of the Park
 Ripes kist ⁹ and ark;
 For all sic wark
 He is richt meet.¹⁰

He is weil kend,¹¹ John of the Side;
 A greater thief did never ride:
 He never tires
 For to break byres;
 Owre muir and mires
 Owre gude and guide.

¹ Wrecked. ² Satisfied. ³ Carry off. ⁴ Nickname.
⁵ Rob. ⁶ Distaff. ⁷ Bolster. ⁸ Shirt. ⁹ Empties chest.
¹⁰ Ready. ¹¹ Known.

There is ane, callit Clement's Hob,
 Fra ilk puir wife reifis her wob,¹
 And all the laif,²
 Whatever they haif;
 The devil resaif³
 Therefor his gob!⁴

To sic great stouth wha e'er wald trow it,
 But gif some great man it allowit?
 Richt sair I rue,
 Thoch it be true,
 There is sa few
 That dar avow it.

Of some great men they have sic gate;⁵
 That ready are them to debate⁶
 And will up-wear⁷
 Their stolen gear,
 That nane dar steir
 Them, air nor late.

What causes thiefis us our-gang⁸
 Bot want of justice us amang?
 Nane takis care
 Thoch all forfare:⁹
 Na man will spare
 Now to do wrang.

Of stouth¹⁰ thoch now they come gude speed
 That neither of men nor God has dreid,

¹ Steals her web.

² Rest.

³ Reserve.

⁴ Stomach.

⁵ Such access.

⁶ Support them.

⁷ Protect.

⁸ Oppress us.

⁹ Protect.

¹⁰ Robbery.

Yit, or I die,
 Some sall them see
 Hing ¹ on a tree
 Whill ² they be deid.

TWEEDSIDE

LORD YESTER

(1645-1713)

[Was tenth Lord Yester, third Earl, and second Marquis of Tweeddale. He played a prominent part in political affairs during the times of the Restoration, the Revolution, and the Union. This lyric, which has been described as "the key-note of Tweedside song", was probably written at Neidpath Castle, Peeblesshire.]

When Meggy and me were acquaint
 I carried my noddle ³ fu' hie,
 Nae lintwhite ⁴ on all the gay plain,
 Nor goudspink ⁵ sae bonny as she;
 I whistled, I pip'd, and I sang,
 I woo'd, but I came nae great speed:
 Therefore I maun wander abroad
 And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.

To Meggy my love I did tell,
 Saut tears did my passion express;
 Alas! for I lo'ed her o'er well,
 And the women lo'e sic a man less;
 Her heart it was frozen and cauld,
 Her pride had my ruin decreed:
 Therefore I maun wander abroad
 And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.

¹ Hang.

² Until.

³ Head.

⁴ Linnet.

⁵ Goldfinch.

"WERE NA MY HEART LICHT I WAD DEE"

LADY GRISELL BAILLIE

(1665-1746)

["This most charming of all heroines of romance-in-real-life" was the daughter of Sir Patrick Hume, of Marchmont, Berwickshire. Sir Patrick, having taken part in a plot to prevent the succession to the throne of the Duke of York (afterwards James II), had to go into hiding. He chose for this purpose the family vault, where Lady Grisell visited him at night bringing food and comfort. Years afterwards, she married George Baillie of Mellerstain.]

There ance was a may¹ and she loo'd na men;
She biggit² her bonnie bower down i' yon glen;
But now she cries, Dool, and well-a-day!
Come down the green gate³ and come here away!

When bonnie young Johnie cam' ower the sea,
He said he saw naething sae lovely as me;
He hecht⁴ me baith rings and mony braw things,—
And were na my heart licht⁵ I wad dee.

He had a wee titty⁶ that loo'd na me,
I was taller and twice as bonnie as she;
She raised such a pother⁷ 'twixt him and his
mother
That were na my heart licht I wad dee.

The day it was set, and the bridal to be;
The wife took a dwam,⁸ and lay down to dee;
She maned and she graned⁹ out o' doulour and
pain,
Till he vow'd he never wad see me again.

¹ Maiden. ² Built. ³ Way. ⁴ Promised. ⁵ Light.
⁶ Sister. ⁷ Trouble. ⁸ Fainting fit. ⁹ Moaned and groaned.

His kin was for ane of a higher degree,
 Said, What had he to do wi' the like of me?
 Albeit I was bonnie, I wasna for Johnie,—
 And were na my heart licht I wad dee.

They said I had neither cow nor calf,
 Nor dribbles o' drink rins through the draff,¹
 Nor pickles o' meal rins through the mill-e'e;
 And were na my heart licht I wad dee.

His titty she was baith wylie and slee:
 She spied me as I cam' ower the lea;
 And then she ran in and made sic a din,—
 Believe your ain een an' ye trow na me.

His bonnet stood aye fu' round on his brow,—
 His auld ane look'd aye as weel as some 's new;
 But now he lets 't wear ony gait ² it will hing,
 And casts himself dowie upon the corn-bing.³

And now he gaes daund'ring about the dykes,
 And a' he dow ⁴ do is to hund the tykes; ⁵
 The live-lang nicht he ne'er steeks ⁶ his e'e;
 And were na my heart licht I wad dee.

Were I but young for thee, as I hae been,
 We should ha' been gallopin' doun on yon green,
 And linkin' ⁷ it on the lily-white lea,—
 And wow! gin I were but young for thee!

¹ No brewing.

² Any way.

³ Throws himself down sadly on the corn-chest.

⁴ Can.

⁵ Set on the dogs.

⁶ Closes.

⁷ Going blithesomely.

WINTER

JAMES THOMSON

(1700-1748)

[Born at Ednam, where his father was minister; in 1701 the family removed to Southdean, on the banks of "sylvan Jed"; educated in the old Abbey of Jedburgh and Edinburgh University; proceeded to the study of Divinity, but left for London without taking a degree or qualifying for the Church; in London subsisted by tutoring and by writing, one of his pupils being the grandson of Lady Grisell Baillie; died of a chill on the 27th August, 1748, and was buried in Richmond, London. Principal works: "The Seasons" (our extract being from "Winter"), "The Castle of Indolence", "Agamemnon", "Sophonisba", "Coriolanus", and collaborated in the production of the masque "Alfred", for which Thomson wrote the famous "Rule, Britannia".]

The keener tempests rise: and fuming dun
From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend; in whose capacious womb
A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congeal'd.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the sky saddens with the gathered storm.
Through the hush'd air the whitening shower
descends
At first thin wavering, till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide and fast, dimming the day,
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow
melts
Along the mazy current. Low, the woods
Bow their hoar heads; and ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid, and chill,
Is one wide dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the labourer-ox

Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The red-breast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of th' embroiling sky,
In joyless fields, and thorny thickets, leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is:
Till more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,
And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,
Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening earth,
With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dispers'd,
Dig for the withered herb through heaps of snow.

Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be kind,
Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
With food at will; lodge them below the storm,
And watch them strict: for from the bellowing
east,

In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains
At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,

The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward urged,
The valley to a shining mountain swells,
Tipt with a wreath high-curling in the sky.

As thus the snows arise; and foul, and fierce,
All Winter drives along the darkened air;
In his own loose-revolving fields, the swain
Disaster'd stands; sees other hills ascend,
Of unknown joyless brow; and other scenes,
Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain:
Nor finds the river, nor the forest hid
Beneath the formless wild; but wanders on
From hill to dale, still more and more astray;
Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,
Stung with the thoughts of home; the thoughts of
home

Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul!
What black despair, what horror fills his heart!
When for the dusky spot, which fancy feign'd
His tufted cottage rising through the snow,
He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
Far from the track and blest abode of man;
While round him night resistless closes fast,
And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
Then throng the busy shapes into his mind,
Of cover'd pits, unfathomably deep,
A dire descent! beyond the power of frost;
Of faithless bogs; of precipices huge,
Smooth'd up with snow; and, what is land, un-
known,
With water, of the still unfrozen spring,
In the loose marsh or solitary lake,

Where the fresh fountain from the bottom boils.
 These check his fearful steps; and down he sinks
 Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
 Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death,
 Mix'd with the tender anguish Nature shoots
 Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,
 His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.
 In vain for him th' officious wife prepares
 The fire fair-blazing and the vestment warm;
 In vain his little children, peeping out
 Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
 With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
 Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold,
 Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve
 The deadly winter seizes; shuts up sense;
 And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
 Lays him along the snows, a stiffened corse,
 Stretch'd out, and bleaching in the northern blast.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

JEAN ELLIOT

(1727-1805)

[Was born at Minto in Teviotdale; evidently led a simple and uneventful spinster life, spent chiefly in Brown Square, Edinburgh. The other song with the same title was written by Alison Rutherford, afterwards Mrs. Cockburn (1712-1794), but does not refer to Flodden. At no time and in no place is the pathetic but exquisite music to "The Flowers of the Forest" better played and better appreciated than on Common Riding Day in Selkirk.]

I 've heard them liltin' ¹ at our yowe-milkin'—
 Lasses a-liltin' before the dawn of day;
 But now they are moanin' on ilka green loanin' ²—
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

¹ Singing blithely.

² Lane, path between fields.

At buchts,¹ in the mornin', nae blythe lads are
scornin';

Lasses are lonely and dowie and wae;—

Nae daffin',² nae gabbin'³—but sighin' and sabbin'

Ilk ane lifts her leglin⁴ and hies her away.

In hair'st, at the shearin', nae youths now are
jeerin'—

Bandsters⁵ are lyart⁶ and runckled⁷ and grey:

At fair or at preachin', nae wooin', nae fleechin'⁸—

The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, in the gloamin', nae youngers are roamin',

'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle⁹ to play;

But ilk maid sits drearie, lamentin' her dearie—

The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dule and wae for the order sent our lads to the
Border!

The English, for ance, by guile wan the day;—

The Flowers of the Forest, that focht aye the
foremost—

The prime of our land—are cauld in the clay.

We 'll hear nae mair liltin' at our yowe-milkin';

Women and bairns are heartless and wae,

Sighin' and moanin' on ilka green loanin'—

The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

¹ Sheep-folds.

² Joking.

³ Chatting.

⁴ Milk-pail.

⁵ Sheaf-binders.

⁶ Hoary-headed.

⁷ Wrinkled.

⁸ Flattery.

⁹ Game like hide-and-seek.

MY MOTHER BIDS ME BIND MY HAIR

MRS. JOHN HUNTER

(1742-1821)

[Anne Home was born at Greenlaw, Berwickshire, 1742; married in 1771 the famous anatomist John Hunter; and thereafter lived mainly in London. A volume of her poems was published 1802. Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) set "My Mother bids me bind my Hair" to music.]

My mother bids me bind my hair
With bands of rosy hue,
Tie up my sleeves with ribbons rare,
And lace my bodice blue.

For why, she cries, sit still and weep,
While others dance and play?
Alas! I scarce can go or creep
While Lubin is away.

'T is sad to think the days are gone
When those we love were near;
I sit upon this mossy stone
And sigh when none can hear.

And while I spin my flaxen thread
And sing my simple lay,
The village seems asleep, or dead,
Now Lubin is away.

THE POET'S EDUCATION

JAMES HOGG

(1770-1835)

[Born at Ettrick Hall, Selkirkshire; helped Scott in collecting material for *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*; tried farming but failed; died at Altrive Lake, Selkirkshire. Unequal though his work may be, it is an extraordinary achievement for a man in his circumstances. Principal works: "The Queen's Wake", "Mador of the Moor", "The Pilgrims of the Sun", "Queen Hynde", &c. His best prose work is "The Brownie of Bodsbeck".

"The Poet's Education" is from old David's tale in "The Queen's Wake". "The Wake" is a collection of poems supposed to have been recited by Scottish Minstrels before Mary, Queen of Scots, at Holyrood during the Christmas festivities, after her return to Scotland. Being struck by the song of an aged minstrel whom Mary heard as she rode from Leith to Holyrood, the Queen announced a poetical festival at the palace, the prize to be Queen Mary's harp.]

The Bard on Ettrick's mountains green
In Nature's bosom nursed had been,
And oft had marked in forest lone
Her beauties on her mountain throne;
Had seen her deck the wild wood tree,
And star with snowy gems the lea;
In loveliest colours paint the plain,
And sow the moon with purple grain;
By golden mead and mountain sheer,
Had viewed the Ettrick waving clear,
Where shadowy flocks of purest snow
Seemed grazing in a world below.

Oft had he viewed, as morning rose,
The bosom of the lonely Lowes,¹
Ploughed far by many a downy keel,
Of wild-duck and of vagrant teal.

¹ Loch adjacent to St. Mary's.

Oft thrilled the heart at close of even,
To see the dappled vales of Heaven,
With many a mountain, moor, and tree,
Asleep upon the St. Mary;
The pilot swan majestic wind,
With all his cygnet fleet behind,
So softly sail and swiftly row,
With sable oar and silken prow.

Instead of war's unhallowed form,
His eye had seen the thunderstorm
Descend within the mountain's brim,
And shroud him in its chambers grim;
Then from its bowels burst amain
The sheeted flame and sounding rain,
And by the bolts in thunder borne,
The Heaven's own breast and mountain torn;
The wild roe from the forest driven;
The oak of ages peeled and riven;
Impending oceans whirl and boil,
Convulsed by Nature's grand turmoil.

THE SKYLARK

Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
Oh, to abide in the desert with thee!

Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud,

Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!

Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
Oh, to abide in the desert with thee!

WHEN THE KYE COMES HAME

Come, all ye jolly shepherds
That whistle through the glen,
I 'll tell ye of a secret
That courtiers dinna ken:
What is the greatest bliss
That the tongue o' man can name?
'T is to woo a bonnie lassie
When the kye comes hame.
When the kye comes hame,
When the kye comes hame,
'Tween the gloaming and the mirk,¹
When the kye comes hame.

¹ Darkness.

'T is not beneath the coronet,
 Nor canopy of state,
 'T is not on couch of velvet,
 Nor arbour of the great—
 'T is beneath the spreading birk,
 In the glen without the name,
 Wi' a bonnie, bonnie lassie,
 When the kye comes hame.
 When the kye comes hame, &c.

There the blackbird bigs ¹ his nest
 For the mate he lo'es to see,
 And on the topmost bough,
 Oh, a happy bird is he;
 Where he pours his melting ditty,
 And love is a' the theme,
 And he 'll woo his bonnie lassie
 When the kye comes hame.
 When the kye comes hame, &c.

When the blewart ² bears a pearl,
 And the daisy turns a pea,
 And the bonnie lucken gowan ³
 Has fauldit ⁴ up her e'e,
 Then the laverock ⁵ frae the blue lift ⁶
 Drops down, an' thinks nae shame
 To woo his bonnie lassie
 When the kye comes hame.
 When the kye comes hame, &c.

See yonder pawkie shepherd,
 That lingers on the hill,

¹ Builds.² Blue wort, small blue flower.³ Daisy.⁴ Folded.⁵ Lark.⁶ Sky.

His ewes are in the fauld,
An' his lambs are lying still;
Yet he downa gang to bed,
For his heart is in a flame
To meet his bonnie lassie
When the kye comes hame.
When the kye comes hame, &c.

When the little wee bit heart
Rises high in the breast,
An' the little wee bit starn ¹
Rises red in the east,
Oh there 's a joy sae dear,
That the heart can hardly frame,
Wi' a bonnie, bonnie lassie,
When the kye comes hame!
When the kye comes hame, &c.

Then since all nature joins
In this love without alloy,
Oh, wha wad prove a traitor
To nature's dearest joy?
Or wha wad choose a crown,
Wi' its perils and its fame,
And miss his bonnie lassie
When the kye comes hame?
When the kye comes hame,
When the kye comes hame,
'Tween the gloaming and the mirk,
When the kye comes hame.

¹ Star.

THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS TO HIS AULD DOG HECTOR

Come, my auld, towzy,¹ trusty friend,
What gars ye look sae dung² wi' wae?
D' ye think my favour 's at at end,
Because thy head is turning grey?

Although thy strength begins to fail
Its best was spent in serving me;
An' can I grudge thy wee bit meal,
Some comfort in thy age to gie?

For mony a day, frae sun to sun,
We 've toiled fu' hard wi' ane anither;
An' mony a thousand mile thou 'st run,
To keep my thraward³ flocks thegither.

To nae thrawn⁴ boy nor naughty wife
Shall thy auld banes become a drudge;
At cats and callants a' thy life
Thou ever bor'st a mortal grudge;

An' whiles thy surly look declared,
Thou lo'ed the women warst of a';
Because my love wi' thee they shared,
A matter out o' right or law.

When sittin' wi' my bonnie Meg⁵
Mair happy than a prince could be,
Thou placed thee by her other leg,
An' watched her wi' a jealous e'e.

.

¹ Rough-haired.

² Utterly downcast.

³ Perverse.

⁴ Obstinate, tricksome.

⁵ Margaret Phillips, who became his wife.

O'er past imprudence, oft alane,
 I 've shed the saut an' silent tear;
 Then, sharin' a' my grief an' pain,
 My puir auld friend came snoovin' ¹ near.

For a' the days we 've sojourned here,
 An' they 've been neither fine nor few,
 That thought possest thee year to year,
 That a' my griefs arase frae you.

Wi' waesome face an' hingin' head,
 Thou wad'st hae pressed thee to my knee;
 While I thy looks as weel could read,
 As thou had'st said in words to me:

" O my dear master, dinna greet;
 What hae I ever done to vex thee?
 See, here I 'm cowrin' at your feet;
 Just take my life, if I perplex thee.

" For a' my toil, my wee drap meat
 Is a' the wage I ask of thee;
 For whilk I 'm oft obliged to wait
 Wi' hungry wame ² an' patient e'e.

" Whatever wayward course ye steer;
 Whatever sad mischance o'ertake thee;
 Man, here is ane will hald ye dear!
 Man, here is ane will ne'er forsake ye!"

.

¹ Fawning, putting his muzzle into his master's hand, &c.

² Stomach.

I ne'er could thole ¹ thy cravin' face,
 Nor when ye pattit on my knee;
 Though in a far an' unco ² place
 I 've whiles been forced to beg for thee.

Even now I 'm in my master's power,
 Where my regard may scarce be shown;
 But ere I 'm forced to gie thee o'er,
 Then you are auld and senseless grown,

I 'll get a cottage o' my ain,
 Some wee bit cannie, lonely biel,³
 Where thy auld heart shall rest fu' fain,
 An' share wi' me my humble meal.

.

When my last bannock's on the hearth
 Of that thou sanna want thy share;
 While I hae house or hauld on earth,
 My Hector shall hae shelter there.

An' should grim death thy noddle save
 Till he has made an end o' me,
 Ye 'll lie a wee while on the grave
 O' ane wha aye was kind to thee.

¹ Endure.

² Strange.

³ Shelter.

LOCK THE DOOR, LARISTON ¹

“ Lock the door, Lariston, lion of Liddesdale;
Lock the door, Lariston, Lowther comes on;
The Armstrongs are flying,
The widows are crying,
The Castletown ’s burning, and Oliver ’s gone!

“ Lock the door, Lariston—high on the weather-
gleam
See how the Saxon plumes bob on the sky—
Yeomen and carbineer,
Billman and halberdier,
Fierce is the foray, and far is the cry!

“ Bewcastle brandishes high his broad scimitar;
Ridley is riding his fleet-footed grey;
Hidley and Howard there,
Wandale and Windermere;
Lock the door, Lariston; hold them at bay.

“ Why dost thou smile, noble Elliot of Lariston?
Why does the joy-candle gleam in thine eye?
Thou bold Border ranger,
Beware of thy danger;
Thy foes are relentless, determined, and nigh.”

Jack Elliot raised up his steel bonnet and lookit,
His hand grasp’d the sword with a nervous embrace;
“ Ah, welcome, brave foemen,
On earth there are no men
More gallant to meet in the foray or chasel

¹ Chief of the Elliots, who had their stronghold at Lariston in Liddesdale.

“ Little know you of the hearts I have hidden here;
Little know you of our moss-troopers’ might—

 Linhope and Sorbie true,
 Sundhope and Milburn too,
Gentle in manner, but lions in fight!

“ I have Mangerton, Ogilvie, Raeburn, and
 Netherbie,

Old Sim of Whitram, and all his array;
 Come all Northumberland,
 Teesdale and Cumberland,
Here at the Breaken tower end shall the fray!”

Scowled the broad sun o’er the links of green
 Liddesdale,

Red as the beacon-light tipped he the wold;
 Many a bold martial eye
 Mirror’d that morning sky,
Never more oped on his orbit of gold.

Shrill was the bugle’s note, dreadful the warrior’s
 shout,

Lances and halberds in splinters were borne;
 Helmet and hauberk then
 Braved the claymore in vain,
Buckler and armlet in shivers were shorn.

See how they wane—the proud files of the Winder-
 merel!

Howard! ah, woe to thy hopes of the day!

 Hear the wide welkin rend,
 While the Scots’ shouts ascend—
“ Elliot of Lariston, Elliot for aye!”

KILMENY

[From "The Queen's Wake". "Kilmeny" is the thirteenth poem and easily the finest. The Queen's harp, however, does not go to its "author", but to the ninth bard for a very commonplace effort called "Young Kennedy". "Kilmeny" is based on an old Traquair tradition of a maiden being spirited away. About one hundred lines have been omitted.]

Bonnie Kilmeny gaed up the glen;
 But it wasna to meet Duncraig's men,
 Nor the rosy monk of the isle to see,
 For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
 It was only to hear the yorlin ¹ sing,
 And pu' the cress-flower round the spring;
 The scarlet hypp and the hind-berrye,²
 And the nut that hung frae the hazel tree;
 For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
 But lang may her minny ³ look o'er the wa';
 And lang may she seek i' the greenwood shaw;
 Lang the laird o' Duncraig blame,
 And lang, lang greet or Kilmeny come hamel!

When many a day had come and fled,
 When grief grew calm, and hope was dead,
 When mess for Kilmeny's soul had been sung,
 When the bedes-man had pray'd and the dead-bell rung,
 Late, late in a gloamin', when all was still,
 When the fringe was red on the westlin' hill,
 The wood was sere, the moon i' the wane,
 The reek ⁴ o' the cot hung o'er the plain,
 Like a little wee cloud in the world its lane;⁵
 When the ingle lowed ⁶ wi' an eiry leme ⁷—
 Late, late in the gloamin' Kilmeny came hamel!

¹ Yellow hammer.² Wild rasp.³ Mother.⁴ Smoke.⁵ Alone.⁶ Burned.⁷ Gleam.

" Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?
 Lang hae we sought baith holt and dene; ¹
 By burn, by ford, by greenwood tree,
 Yet you are halesome and fair to see.
 Where gat ye that joup ² o' the lily sheen?
 That bonnie snood ³ o' the birk sae green?
 And these roses, the fairest that ever were seen?
 Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?"

Kilmeny look'd up wi' a lovely grace,
 But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny's face;
 As still was her looks, and as still was her ee,
 As the stillness that lay on the emerant ⁴ lea,
 Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.
 For Kilmeny had been, she kenn'd not where,
 And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare,
 Kilmeny had been where the cock never crew,
 Where the rain never fell, and the wind never blew.
 But it seemed as the harp of the sky had rung,
 And the airs of heaven played round her tongue,
 When she spoke of the lovely forms she had seen,
 And a land where sin had never been;
 A land of love and a land of light,
 Withouten sun, or moon, or night;
 Where the river swa'd a living stream,
 And the light a pure and cloudless beam;
 The land of vision, it would seem,
 A still, an everlasting dream.

In yon green wood there is a waik, ⁵
 And in that waik there is a wene, ⁶
 And in that wene there is a maik; ⁷

¹ Wood and glen.

² Petticoat.

³ Hair-band.

⁴ Emerald.

⁵ A hollow.

⁶ Recess.

⁷ Mate, consort.

That neither has flesh, nor blood, nor bane;
And down in yon greenwood he walks his lane.

In that green wene Kilmeny lay,
Her bosom hap'd ¹ wi' flowerets gay;
But the air was soft, and the silence deep,
And bonnie Kilmeny fell sound asleep,
She kenned nae mair, nor open'd her ee,
Till wak'd by the hymns of a far countrie.

She woke on a couch of silk sae slim,
All striped wi' the bars of the rainbow's rim;
And lovely beings round were rife,
Who erst had travelled mortal life;
And aye they smiled and gan' to speer,²
"What spirit has brought this mortal here?"

.
They clasped her waist, and her hands sae fair,
They kissed her cheeks, and they kemed ³ her hair;
And round came many a blooming fere,⁴
Saying, "Bonnie Kilmeny, ye 're welcome here!
Women are freed of the littand scorn,⁵
O blessed be the day Kilmeny was born!
Now shall the land of the spirits see,
Now shall it ken what a woman may be!

.
"O, bonnie Kilmeny! free frae stain,
If ever you seek the world again,
That world of sin, of sorrow, and fear,
O tell of the joys that are waiting here;
And tell of the signs you shall shortly see;
Of the times that are now, and the times that shall be."

¹ Covered over.² Ask.³ Combed.⁴ Companion.⁵ Foul reproach.

They lifted Kilmeny, they led her away,
And she walked in the light of a sunless day;
The sky was a dome of crystal bright,
The fountain of vision, and fountain of light;
The emerant fields were of dazzling glow,
And the flowers of everlasting blow.
Then deep in the stream her body they laid,
That her youth and her beauty never might fade;
And they smil'd on Heaven, when they saw her lie
In the stream of life that wandered by.
And she heard a song, she heard it sung,
She ken'd not where; but sae sweetly it rung,
It fell on the ear like a dream of the morn:—
“ O! blest be the day Kilmeny was born!
Now shall the land of the spirits see,
Now shall it ken what a woman may be!
The sun that shines on the world sae bright,
A borrowed gleid ¹ frae the fountain of light,
And the moon that sleeks the sky sae dun,
Like a gouden bow or a beamless sun,
Shall wear away and be seen nae mair,
And the angels shall miss them travelling the air;
But lang, lang after, baith nicht and day,
When the sun and the world have fled away,
When the sinner has gane to his waesome doom,
Kilmeny shall smile in eternal bloom!”

They bore her away, she wist not how,
For she felt not arm nor rest below;
But so swift they wained ² her through the light,
’T was like the motion of sound or sight;
They seemed to split the gales of air,
And yet nor gale nor breeze was there.

¹ Spark.² Carried.

Unnumbered groves below them grew,
They came, they passed, and backward flew,
Like floods of blossoms gliding on,
A moment seen, in a moment gone.
O! never vales to mortal view
Appeared like those o'er which they flew,
That land to human spirits given,
The lowermost vales of the storied heaven;
From whence they can view the world below,
And heaven's blue gates with sapphires glow,
More glory yet unmeet to know.

They bore her far to a mountain green,
To see what mortal never had seen;
And they seated her high on a purple sward,
And bade her heed what she saw and heard,
And note the changes the spirits wrought;
For now she lived in the land of thought.
She looked, and she saw nor sun nor skies,
But a crystal dome of a thousand dyes;
She looked, and she saw nae land aright,
But an endless whirl of glory and light:
And radiant beings went and came,
Far swifter than wind, or the linkèd flame.
She hid her e'en frae the dazzling view;
She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw a sun in a summer sky,
And clouds of amber sailing by;
A lovely land beneath her lay,
And that land had lakes and mountains grey;
And that land had valleys and hoary piles,
And marled ¹ seas and a thousand isles.

¹ Dotted over with lights and shadows.

Its fields were speckled, its forests green,
 And its lakes were all of the dazzling sheen,
 Like magic mirrors, where shining lay
 The sun, and the sky, and the cloudlet grey,
 Which heaved and trembled and gently swung;
 On every shore they seemed to be hung:
 For there they were seen on their downward plain
 A thousand times and a thousand again;
 In winding lake, and placid firth,
 Little peaceful heavens in the bosom of earth.

Kilmeny sighed and seemed to grieve,
 For she found her heart to that land did cleave;
 She saw the corn wave on the vale;
 She saw the deer run down the dale;
 She saw the plaid and the broad claymore,
 And the brows that the badge of freedom bore;
 And she thought she had seen the land before.

.
 She saw below her fair unfurled
 One-half of all the glowing world,
 Where oceans rolled, and rivers ran,
 To bound the aims of sinful man.

.
 But to sing the sights Kilmeny saw,
 So far surpassing nature's law,
 The singer's voice wad ¹ sink away,
 And the string of his harp wad cease to play.
 But she saw till the sorrows of man were by,²
 And all was love and harmony;—
 Till the stars of heaven fell calmly away,
 Like flakes of snaw on a winter day.

¹ Would.² Past.

Then Kilmeny begged again to see
 'The friends she had left in her ain countrie
 'To tell of the place where she had been,
 And the glories that lay in the land unseen;
 To warn the living maidens fair,
 The loved of heaven, the spirits' care,
 That all whose minds unmeled ¹ remain
 Shall bloom in beauty when time is gane.

With distant music, soft and deep,
 They lulled Kilmeny sound asleep;
 And when she awakened, she lay her lane,²
 All hap'd with flowers, in the greenwood wene.
 When seven long years had come and fled,
 When grief was calm, and hope was dead,
 When scarce was remembered Kilmeny's name,
 Late, late in a gloamin' Kilmeny came hame.
 And O, her beauty was fair to see,
 But still and steadfast was her ee!
 Such beauty bard may never declare,
 For there was no pride nor passion there;
 And the soft desire of maiden's een
 In that mild face could never be seen.
 Her seymar ³ was the lily flower,
 And her cheek was the moss-rose in the shower;
 And her voice like the distant melodye,
 That floats along the twilight sea.
 But she loved to raike ⁴ the lanely glen,
 And keep afar frae the haunts of men,
 Her holy hymns unheard to sing,
 To suck the flowers, and drink the spring;
 But wherever her peaceful form appeared,
 The wild beasts of the hill were cheered;

¹ Untainted.
 (D 638)

² By herself.

³ Loose robe.

⁴ Range.
 E2

The wolf played blythely round the field,
 The lordly byson lowed, and kneeled;
 The dun deer wooed with manner bland,
 And cowered beneath her lily hand,
 And when at eve the woodlands rung,
 When hymns of other worlds she sung
 In ecstasy of sweet devotion,
 O, then the glen was all in motion!
 The wild beasts of the forest came,
 Broke from their bughts ¹ and faulds ² the tame,
 And goved ³ around, charmed and amazed;
 Even the dull cattle crooned and gazed,
 And murmured, and looked with anxious pain
 For something the mystery to explain.
 The buzzard came with the throstle-cock;
 The corby ⁴ left her houf ⁵ in the rock;
 The blackbird ⁶ alang wi' the eagle flew;
 The hind came tripping o'er the dew;
 The wolf and the kid their raik ⁷ began,
 And the tod ⁸ and the lamb and the leveret ⁹ ran;
 The hawk and the hern ¹⁰ attour ¹¹ them hung,
 And the merle ¹² and the mavis ¹³ forhooyed ¹⁴ their young;
 And all in a peaceful ring were hurled—
 It was like an eve in a sinless world!

When a month and a day had come and gane,
 Kilmeny sought the greenwood wene;
 There laid her down on the leaves sae green,
 And Kilmeny on earth was never mair seen.
 But O! the words that fell frae her mooth
 Were words of wonder, and words of truth!

¹ Pens. ² Folds. ³ Mooned. ⁴ Raven. ⁵ Frequented place.
⁶ Ramble. ⁷ Fox. ⁸ Young hare. ⁹ Heron. ¹⁰ Above.
¹¹ Blackbird. ¹² Song thrush. ¹³ Forsook.

But all the land were in fear and dread,
For they kendna whether she was living or dead.
It wasna her hame, and she couldna remain;
She left this world of sorrow and pain,
And returned to the land of thought again.

LINES TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

[These lines, with those taken from John Leyden's "Scenes of Infancy", give a good idea of the relations existing between Sir Walter on the one hand, and Hogg and Leyden on the other. Scott has expressed his appreciation of their friendship and worth with characteristic generosity. This poem was written on the occasion of Scott's being honoured with a baronetcy.]

Sound, my old harp, thy boldest key
To strain of high festivity!
Can'st thou be silent in the brake,
Loitering by Altrive's ¹ mountain lake,
When, he who gave the hand its sway
That now has tuned thee many a day,
Has gained thee honours trulier won,
Than e'er by sword of Albyn's son;
High guerdon of a soul refined,
The need of an exalted mind?

Well suits such wreath thy loyal head,
My counsellor, and friend indeed.
Though hard through life I 've pressed my way
For many a chill and joyless day,
Since I have lived enrapt to hail
My sovereign's ² worth, my friend's avail,
And see, what more I prize than gain,
Our forest harp the bays obtain,
I 'll ween I have not lived in vain.

¹ Hogg's home for many years. Near St. Mary's Loch. ² George IV.

Ah! could I dream when first we met,
When by the scanty ingle set,
Beyond the moors where curlews wheel
In Ettrick's bleakest, loneliest shiel,
Conning old songs of other times,
Most uncouth chants and crabbed rhymes—
Could I e'er dream that wayward wight,
Of roguish joke, and heart so light,
In whose oft-changing eye I gazed
Not without dread the head was crazed,
Should e'er, by genius' force alone,
Skim o'er an ocean sailed by none;
All the hid shoals of envy miss,
And gain such noble port as this!

I could not: but I cherish still
Mirth at the scene, and ever will,
When o'er the fells we took our way;
('T is twenty years, even to a day,
Since we two sought the fabled urn
Of marble blue by Rankleburn ¹):
No tomb appeared; but oft we traced
Towns, camps, and battle-lines effaced,
Which never were, nor could remain
Save in the bold enthusiast's brain:
The same to us—it turned our lays
To chiefs and tales of ancient days.
One broken pot alone was found
Deep in the rubbish under ground,
In middle of the ancient fane—
“ A gallant helmet split in twain!”
The truth was obvious; but in faith
On you all words were waste of breath;

¹ Flows into the Ettrick.

You only looked demure and sly,
 And sore the brow fell o'er the eye;
 You could not bear that you should ride
 O'er pathless waste and forest wide,
 Only to say that you had been
 To see that nought was to be seen.

The evenings came; more social mirth
 Ne'er flowed around the cottage hearth:
 When Maitland's song first met your ear,
 How the furled visage up did clear,
 Beaming delight! though now a shade
 Of doubt would darken into dread
 That some unskilled presumptuous arm
 Had marred tradition's mighty charm.
 Scarce grew thy lurking dread the less,
 Till she, the ancient minstrelless,¹
 With fervid voice, and kindling eye,
 And withered arms waving on high,
 Sung forth these words in eldritch shriek,
 While tears stood on thy nut-brown cheek—

*“Na, we are nane o' the lads o' France,
 Nor, e'er pretend to be;
 We be three lads of fair Scotland,
 Auld Maitland's sons, a' three!”*²

Thy fist made all the table sing—
 “By—sir, but that is the thing!”

Yes, twenty years have come and fled,
 Since we two met, and time has shed
 His riming honours o'er each brow—
 My state the same, how changed art thou!

¹ Hogg's mother.

² From “Auld Maitland”.

But every year yet overpast
I 've loved thee dearer than the last.
For all the volumes thou hast wrote,
Those that are owned, and that are not,¹
Let these be conned even to a grain,
I 've said it, and will say 't again—
Who knows thee but by these alone,
The better-half is still unknown.

I know thee well—no kinder breast
Beats for the woes of the distressed,
Bleeds for the wounds it cannot heal,
Or yearns more o'er thy country's weal.
Thy love embraces Britain o'er,
And spreads and radiates with her shore;
Scarce fading on her ocean's foam,
But still 't is brightest nearest home,
Till those within its central rays,
Rejoicing, bask within the blaze.

Blessed be the act of sovereign grace,
That raised thee 'bove the rhyming race;
Blessed be the heart and head elate,
The noble generous estimate
That marked thy worth, and owned the hand
Resistless in its native land.
Bootless the waste of empty words,
Thy pen is worth ten thousand swords.
Long brook thy honours, gallant knight,
So firm of soul, so stanch of right;
For had thy form but reached its prime,
Free from mischance ² in early time,

¹ Waverley Novels.

² Scott was lame.

No stouter sturdier arm of weir
 Had wielded sword or battle spear.
 For war thy boardly frame was born,
 For battle shout, and bugle-horn;
 Thy boyish feats, thy youthful dream—
 How thy muse kindles at the theme!
 Chance marred the path, or Heaven's decree;
 How blessed for Scotland and for me!

Scarce sounds thy name as 't did before
 Walter the Abbot now no more:
 Well—let it be,—I 'll not repine,
 But love the title since 't is thine.
 Long brook thy honours, firm to stand
 As Eildon rock ¹; and that thy land,
 The first e'er won by dint of rhyme,
 May bear thy name till latest time,
 And stretch from bourn of Abbot's lea
 To Philhope Cross, and Eildon Tree,
 Is the heart's wish of one who 's still
 Thy grateful shepherd of the hill!

THE BARD'S FAREWELL

[The concluding lines of "The Queen's Wake".]

Now, my loved harp, a while farewell!
 I leave thee on the cold grey thorn;
 The evening dews will mar thy swell,
 That waked to joy the cheerful morn.

Farewell sweet soother of my woe!
 Chill blows the blast around my head;

¹ Near Melrose.

And louder yet that blast may blow,
When down this weary vale I 've sped.

The wreath lies on St. Mary's shore;
The mountain sounds are harsh and loud;
The lofty brows of stern Clockmore ¹
Are visored with the moving cloud.

But winter's deadly hues shall fade
On moorland bald and mountain shaw,
And soon the rainbow's lovely shade
Sleeps on the breast of Bowerhope ² law.

Then will the glowing suns of spring,
The genial shower, and stealing dew,
Wake every forest bird to sing,
And every mountain flower renew.

But not the rainbow's ample ring,
That spans the glen and mountain grey,
Though fanned by western breezes' wing,
And sunned by summer's glowing ray.

To man decayed, can evermore
Renew the age of love and glee!
Can ever second spring restore
To my old mountain harp and me!

But when the hue of softened green
Spreads over hill and lonely lea,
And lowly primrose opes unseen
Her virgin bosom to the bee;

¹ Two miles to west of St. Mary's Loch.

² On the east side of St. Mary's.

When hawthorns breathe their odours far,
 And carols hail the year's return;
 And daisy spreads her silver star
 Unheeded by the mountain burn;

Then will I seek the aged thorn,
 The haunted wild and fairy ring,
 Where oft thy erring numbers borne
 Have taught the wandering winds to sing.¹

HAPPY HOURS AT SANDYKNOWE

SIR WALTER SCOTT

(1771-1832)

[The details of his life and achievement are too rich and varied to be compressed into a few lines of biography, and should be sought for elsewhere. Scott, though not Border born, was of good Border stock; and passed much of his youth, for health reasons, on the Border, so his mind was full of Border legend and romance. It would be difficult to exaggerate his contribution to romantic literature.

When about eighteen months old, Scott lost the power of his right leg. He was sent to his grandfather's farm at Sandyknowe, Roxburghshire, to see what air and liberty could do towards recovery. The first extract is from "Marmion", Introduction to Canto III.]

Thus while I ape the measure wild
 Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
 Rude though they be, still with the chime
 Return the thoughts of early time;
 And feelings, rous'd in life's first day,
 Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
 Then rise those crags,² that mountain tower
 Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
 Though no broad river swept along,
 To claim, perchance, heroic song;

¹ This line appears on Hogg's monument at St. Mary's Loch.

² On which Smailholm Tower stands.

Though sigh'd no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claim'd homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely pil'd;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honeysuckle lov'd to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round survey'd;
And still I thought that shatter'd tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvell'd as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still, with trump and clang,
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features seam'd with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;

Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretch'd at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war display'd;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scatter'd Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brighten'd at our evening fire!
From the thatch'd mansion's grey-hair'd Sire,¹
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye, in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Show'd what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable Priest,²
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint;
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless joke:
For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child;
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endur'd, belov'd, caress'd.

¹ Robert Scott, the poet's grandfather.

² Dr. Duncan, minister of Smailholm.

ASHIESTIEL IN NOVEMBER

[From "Marmion", the Introduction to Canto I. On 16th December, 1799, Scott was appointed Sheriff of Ettrick Forest (Selkirkshire), and some time later removed from Lasswade to Ashiestiel.]

November's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled green-wood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest ¹ hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;
Away hath passed the heather-bell,
That bloomed so rich on Needpath-fell; ²
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To sheltered dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines;

¹ Ettrick Forest.

² Places named are near Ashiestiel.

In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

ETTRICK FOREST

[From "Marmion", Introduction to Canto II. Many references here remind us of Scott's ballad-raids. On this particular one he first met Willie Laidlaw and James Hogg.]

The scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourished once a forest fair.
When these waste glens with copse were lin'd,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon Thorn¹—perchance whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely 'Thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so gray and stubborn now,
Wav'd in each breeze a sapling bough;
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan to the rock,
And through the foliage show'd his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red;

¹ At junction of Whitehope and Douglas Burns, Yarrow.

What pines on every mountain sprung,
 O'er every dell what birches hung,
 In every breeze what aspens shook,
 What alders shaded every brook!
 "Here, in my shade," methinks he 'd say,
 "The mighty stag at noontide lay;
 The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,
 (The neighbouring dingle ¹ bears his name,)
 With lurching step around me prowl,
 And stop, against the moon to howl;
 The mountain boar, on battle set,
 His tusks upon my stem would whet;
 While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
 Have bounded by through gay green-wood.
 Then oft, from Newark's ² riven tower,
 Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
 A thousand vassals muster'd round,
 With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
 And I might see the youth intent
 Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
 And through the brake the rangers stalk,
 And falc'ners hold the ready hawk;
 And foresters, in greenwood trim,
 Lead in the leash the gaze-hounds ³ grim,
 Attentive, as the bratchet's ⁴ bay
 From the dark covert drove the prey,
 To slip them as he broke away.
 The startled quarry bounds amain,
 As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;
 Whistles the arrow from the bow,
 Answers the harquebuss below;
 While all the rocking hills reply

¹ Wolf Rig, Douglas Burn.

² Near Selkirk.

³ A dog that follows its prey by sight.

⁴ Sleuth hound.

To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Of such proud huntings, many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick, and on Yarrow,
Where erst the Outlaw ¹ drew his arrow.
But not more blythe that sylvan court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Marriott,² was the same.
Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
O'er holt or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Passed by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic, and in Gothic lore:
We mark'd each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill nor brook we paced along,
But had its legend or its song.
All silent now—for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill! ³
No longer, from thy mountains dun,
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
And while his honest heart glows warm,
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, " 'The Chieftain of the Hills!'"

¹ Murray.

² To whom the Introduction to Canto II is addressed.

³ Between Yarrow and Ettrick, and a seat of the Duke of Buccleuch.

No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
'Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
Fair as the elves whom Janet ¹ saw
By moonlight, dance on Carterhaugh;
No youthful Baron's left to grace
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon.

LONE ST. MARY'S

[From "Marmion", Introduction to Canto II.]

When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend,² we yet may gain,
There is a pleasure in this pain:
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impress'd.
'T is silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;
But, in a bosom thus prepar'd,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone St. Mary's silent lake;
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view;

¹ Ballad of "Tamlane".

² Marriott.

Shaggy with heath, but lonely, bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there.
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scattered pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed might lie;
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
There 's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd.

MEMORIES OF THE PAST

[From "Marmion", Introduction to Canto II.]

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here, have I thought, 't were sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain's cell,

Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton ¹ long'd to spend his age.
'T were sweet to mark the setting day,
On Bourhope's ² lonely top decay;
And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake, and mountain's side,
To say, " Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey;"
'Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tower,³
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower:
And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepar'd,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'T were sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's ⁴ grave,
That Wizard Priest's, whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust;
On which no sunbeam ever shines
(So superstition's creed divines),
'Thence view the lake, with sullen roar
Heave her broad billows to the shore;
And mark the wild-swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave:
'Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp, and trim my fire;

¹ See " Il Penseroso ".

² Hill beside St. Mary's Loch.

³ Near the loch, and the birthplace of the Flower of Yarrow.

⁴ Binram, a necromantic priest.

There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's distant shriek
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard Priest was come,
To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I clear'd,
And smiled to think that I had fear'd.

DARK LOCH-SKENE

[From "Marmion", Introduction to Canto II.]

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
Such peaceful solitudes displease:
He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer's ¹ choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene.²
There eagles scream from isle to shore;
Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
O'er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven;
Through the rude barriers of the lake,
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,
Diving, as if condemned to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,

¹ A character in "Marmion".

² A mountain lake at head of Moffat Water.

Who, prison'd by enchanter's spell,
 Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
 And well that Palmer's form and mien
 Had suited with the stormy scene.
 Just on the edge, straining his ken
 To view the bottom of the den,
 Where, deep, deep down, and far within,
 Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
 Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
 And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
 White as the snowy charger's ¹ tail,
 Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

STORM AND STRESS

[From "Marmion", Introduction to Canto IV.]

Even now it scarcely seems a day,
 Since first I tuned this idle lay;
 A task so often thrown aside,
 When leisure graver cares denied,
 That now, November's dreary gale,
 Whose voice inspir'd my opening tale,
 That same November gale once more
 Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
 Their vex'd boughs streaming to the sky,
 Once more our naked birches sigh;
 And Blackhouse ² heights, and Ettrick Pen,³
 Have donn'd their wintry shrouds again;
 And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
 Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
 Earlier than wont along the sky,
 Mix'd with the rack, the snow-mists fly;

¹ Grey Mare's Tail, a water-fall 300 feet high, and two miles from Birkhill. ² Near St. Mary's Loch. ³ A hill near the head of Ettrick.

The shepherd, who in summer sun,
Had something of our envy won,
As thou ¹ with pencil, I with pen,
The features trac'd of hill and glen;—
He who, outstretch'd, the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
View'd the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumber'd o'er his tatter'd book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessen'd tide;—
At midnight now, the snowy plain
Finds sterner labour for the swain.
When red hath set the beamless sun,
Through heavy vapours dank and dun;
When the tir'd ploughman, dry and warm,
Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
Against the casement's tinkling pane;
The sounds that drive wild deer, and fox,
To shelter in the brake and rocks,
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain;
Till, dark above, and white below,
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.
Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine;
Whistling, and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid:
His flock he gathers, and he guides
To open downs, and mountain-sides,

¹ James Skene.

Where fiercest though the tempest blow,
 Least deeply lies the drift below.
 The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
 Stiffens his locks to icicles;
 Oft he looks back, while, streaming far,
 His cottage window seems a star,—
 Loses its feeble gleam,—and then
 Turns patient to the blast again,
 And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
 Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep.
 If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
 Benumbing death is in the gale:
 His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
 Close to the hut, no more his own,
 Close to the aid he sought in vain,
 The morn may find the stiffen'd swain:
 His widow sees, at dawning pale,
 His orphans raise their feeble wail;
 And, close beside him, in the snow,
 Poor Yarrow,¹ partner of their woe,
 Couches upon his master's breast,
 And licks his cheek, to break his rest.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

[From "Marmion", Introduction to Canto VI.]

Heap on more wood!—the wind is chill;
 But let it whistle as it will,
 We 'll keep our Christmas merry still.
 Each age has deem'd the new-born year
 The fittest time for festal cheer:
 Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane

¹ The shepherd's dog.

At Iol¹ more deep the mead did drain;
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes deck'd the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dress'd steer,
Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnaw'd rib, and marrow-bone:
Or listen'd all, in grim delight,
While Scalds yell'd out the joys of fight.
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While wildy-loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung.
That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.²
The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.

¹ Yule.

² "Mass is never said at night, except on Christmas Eve".—Scott.

'Then open'd wide the Baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doff'd his pride.
'The heir, with roses in his shoes,
'That night might village partner choose;
'The Lord, underogating, share
'The vulgar game of " post and pair ".
All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
'That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

'The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
'The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubb'd till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
'Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
'Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
'The wassel round, in good brown bowls,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls.¹
'There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce
At such high tide, her savoury goose.

¹ Circulates.

Then came the merry makers in,
And carols roar'd with blithesome din,
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;
But O! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light!

England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'T was Christmas broach'd the mightest ale;
'T was Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger, in our northern clime,
Some remnants of the good old time;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetch'd claim
To Southron ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
And thus, my Christmas still I hold
Where my great-grandsire ¹ came of old,
With amber beard and flaxen hair,
And reverend apostolic air—
The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:

¹ The famous Beardie.

Small thought was his, in after time
 E'er to be hitch'd into a rhyme,
 The simple sire could only boast,
 That he was loyal to his cost;
 The banish'd race of kings rever'd,
 And lost his land, but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
 Is with fair liberty combin'd;
 Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
 And flies constraint the magic wand
 Of the fair dame that rules the land,
 Little we heed the tempest drear,
 While music, mirth, and social cheer,
 Speed on their wings the passing year.
 And Mertoun's halls ¹ are fair e'en now,
 When not a leaf is on the bough.
 Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
 As loath to leave the sweet domain,
 And holds his mirror to her face,
 And clips her with a close embrace:—
 Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
 And as reluctant turn us home.

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

[Written in 1816. "I always regard it—air and words—as the test of a man's insight into the real difference between the Romantic and the Modern vein" (the late Mr. W. Keith Leask, in a letter to the Compiler).]

"Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
 Why weep ye by the tide?
 I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
 And ye sall be his bride:

¹ On a loop of the Tweed.

And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen."—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.¹

"Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen."—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen."—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer'd fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen!
She's o'er the Border, and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

¹ The first stanza is old. Hazeldean, or Hassendean, is in Roxburghshire.

BORDER MARCH

[From "The Monastery", Chapter 25.]

March, march, Ettrick, and Teviotdale,
Why the deil dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border.
Many a banner spread,
Flutters above your head,
Many a crest that is famous in story.
Mount and make ready then,
Sons of the mountain glen,
Fight for the Queen and our old Scottish glory.

Come from the hills where your hirsels ¹ are grazing,
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow.
Trumpets are sounding,
War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms, and march in good order;
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border.

¹ Herds of sheep.

WILLIAM OF DELORAINE'S RIDE

[From "The Lay of the Last Minstrel", Canto I. William of Deloraine, whom Scott seeks to portray as a typical moss-trooper, is sent by the Lady of Branksome to get Michael Scot's magic book which is buried with the Wizard in Melrose Abbey. The "ride", extending to some eighteen miles, may be followed fairly accurately to-day by anyone either walking, cycling, or motoring.]

XXII

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better hadst thou ne'er been born."

XXIV

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;

Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
" Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Were 't my neck-verse at Hairibee."

XXV

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He pass'd the Peel of Goldiland,
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round;
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark;
" Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."
" For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gain'd the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

XXVII

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crag the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hew'd his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs, which for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love!

XXVIII

Unchalleng'd thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;

For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was arm'd complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggl'd by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing-place.

XXX

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray;
Prize to the victor of the day;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran:
Like some tall rock with lichens gray,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,

Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 't was silence all;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

MELROSE ABBEY

[" The Lay of the Last Minstrel ", the opening lines of Canto II.
Compare with John Leyden's description.]

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light 's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem fram'd of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair.

SWEET TEVIOT

[“The Lay of the Last Minstrel”, the opening lines of Canto IV.]

Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide
 The glaring bale fires ¹ blaze no more;
 No longer steel-clad warriors ride
 Along thy wild and willow'd shore;
 Where'er thou wind'st by dale or hill,
 All, all is peaceful, all is still,
 As if thy waves, since Time was born,
 Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
 Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
 Nor started at the bugle-horn.

THE PATRIOT

[“The Lay of the Last Minstrel”, second verse paragraph, Canto VI. Lines 14 to 17 very appropriately appear on the pedestal of Sir Walter's statue in the Market Place, Selkirk.]

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
 Meet nurse for a poetic child!
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
 Land of the mountain and the flood,
 Land of my sires! what mortal hand
 Can e'er untie the filial band,
 That knits me to thy rugged strand!
 Still, as I view each well-known scene,
 Think what is now, and what hath been,
 Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
 Sole friends thy woods and streams were left
 And thus I love them better still,
 Even in extremity of ill.

¹ Warning beacons.

By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

A FAIR RETREAT

[*"The Lay of the Last Minstrel", closing lines.*]

Hush'd is the harp: the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage.
No; close beneath proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope the door,
And give the aid he begg'd before.
So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Wav'd the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievement high,

And circumstance of chivalry,
 Till the rapt traveller would stay,
 Forgetful of the closing day;
 And noble youths, the strain to hear,
 Forsook the hunting of the deer;
 And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
 Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

THE TEVIOT

JOHN LEYDEN

(1775-1811)

[Born at Denholm, near Hawick, his life is a story of triumph against difficulty, both at the University of Edinburgh, and in the East, to which he went in 1803. Before leaving for India he wrote "The Scenes of Infancy". His capacity for languages was extraordinary (he is said to have been acquainted with at least forty-five), and his achievement as a linguist is more wonderful than his achievement as poet. There is one feature of his poetry, however, which is worthy of remark: that he showed an enthusiasm for nature when it was little considered by poets. The extracts, with the exception of "The Court of Keeldar", are taken from "The Scenes of Infancy".]

E'en as I muse, my former life returns,
 And youth's first ardour in my bosom burns.
 Like music melting in a lover's dream,
 I hear the murmuring of Teviot's stream.
 The crisping rays, that on the waters lie,
 Depict a paler moon, a fainter sky;
 While, through inverted alder boughs below,
 The twinkling stars with greener lustre glow.

On these fair banks, thine ancient bards no more,
 Enchanting stream! their melting numbers pour;
 But still their viewless harps, on poplars hung,
 Sigh the soft airs they learned when time was young.

And those who tread, with holy feet, the ground,
At lovely midnight, hear their silver sound;
When river breezes wave their dewy wings,
And lightly fan the wild enchanted strings.

What earthly hand presumes, aspiring, bold,
The airy harp of ancient bards to hold,
With ivy's sacred wreath to crown his head,
And lead the plaintive chorus of the dead—
He round the poplar's base shall nightly strew
The willow's pointed leaves of pallid blue,
And still restrain the gaze, reverted keen,
When round him deepen sighs from shapes unseen,
And o'er his lonely head, like summer bees,
The leaves self-moving tremble on the trees.
When morn's first rays fall quivering on the strand,
Then is the time to stretch the daring hand,
And snatch it from the bending poplar pale,
The magic harp of ancient Teviotdale.

WAT O' HARDEN'S PLUNDER

[“ Tradition relates, that, amid the plunder of household furniture hastily carried off by them (the Scotts), in one of their predatory incursions, a child was found enveloped in the heap, who was adopted into the clan, and fostered by Mary Scott, ‘ the Flower of Yarrow ’, who married the celebrated Wat of Harden, about the latter end of the sixteenth century. This child of fortune became afterwards celebrated as a poet, and is said to have composed many of the popular songs of the Border; but tradition has not preserved his name.”—Leyden.]

Where Bortha¹ hoarse, that loads the meads with sand,
Rolls her red tide to Teviot's western strand,
Through salty hills whose sides are shagged with thorn,
Where springs, in scattered tufts, the dark-green corn,

¹ Borthwick, tributary of the Teviot, joins it a little above Hawick.

Towers wood-girt Harden ¹ far above the vale;
And clouds of ravens o'er the turrets sail.
A hardy race, who never shrunk from war,
The Scott, to rival realms a mighty bar,
Here fixed his mountain-home;—a wide domain,
And rich the soil, had purple heath been grain;
But, what the niggard ground of wealth denied,
From fields more blessed his fearless arm supplied.

The waning harvest-moon shone cold and bright;
The warder's horn was heard at dead of night;
And, as the massy portals wide were flung,
With stamping hoofs the rocky pavement rung.
What fair, half-veiled, leans from her latticed hall,
Where red the wavering gleams of torch-light fall?
'T is Yarrow's fairest flower, who, through the gloom,
Looks wistful for her lover's dancing plume.
Amid the piles of spoil that strewed the ground,
Her ear, all anxious, caught a wailing sound:
With trembling haste the youthful matron flew,
And from the harried heaps an infant drew:
Scared at the light, his little hands he flung
Around her neck, and to her bosom clung;
While beauteous Mary sooth'd, in accents mild,
His fluttering soul, and clasped her foster-child.
Of milder mood the gentle captive grew,
Nor loved the scenes that scared his infant view.
In vales remote, from camps and castles far,
He shunned the fearful, shuddering joy of war;
Content the loves of simple swains to sing,
Or wake to fame the harp's heroic string.

His are the strains, whose wandering echoes thrill
The shepherd lingering on the twilight hill:
When evening brings the merry folding-hours.

¹ Near Hawick.

And sun-eyed daisies close their winking flowers.
He lived, o'er Yarrow's Flower to shed the tear,
To strew the holly's leaves o'er Harden's bier;
But none was found above the minstrel's tomb,
Emblem of peace, to bid the daisy bloom:
He, nameless as the race from which he sprung,
Saved other names, and left his own unsung.

GREEN CAVERS

Green Cavers, hallowed by the Douglas name,
Tower from thy woods! assert thy former fame!
Hoist the broad standard of thy peerless line,
Till Percy's Norman banner bow to thine!
The hoary oaks that round thy turrets stand—
Hark! how they boast each mighty planter's hand!
Lords of the Border! where their pennons flew,
Mere mortal might could ne'er their arms subdue:
Their sword, the scythe of ruin, mowed a host;
Nor Death a triumph o'er the line could boast.

MELROSE ABBEY

Deserted Melrose! oft, with holy dread,
I trace thy ruins mouldering o'er the dead;
While, as the fragments fall, wild fancy hears
The solemn steps of old departed years,
When beamed young Science in these cells forlorn,
Beauteous and lonely as the star of morn.
Where gorgeous panes a rainbow-lustre threw,
The rank green grass is cobwebbed o'er with dew;
Where pealing organs, through the pillared fane,
Swelled, clear to heaven, devotion's sweetest strain,

The bird of midnight hoots with dreary tone,
And sullen echoes through the cloisters moan.

DARK RUBERSLAW

Dark Ruberslaw,¹ that lifts his head sublime,
Rugged and hoary with the wrecks of time!
On his broad misty front the giant wears
The horrid furrows of ten thousand years;
His aged brows are crowned with curling fern,
Where perches, grave and lone, the hooded erne,
Majestic bird! by ancient shepherds styled,
The lonely hermit of the russet wild,
That loves, amid the stormy blast to soar,
When through disjointed cliffs the tempests roar,
Climbs on strong wing the storm, and, screaming high,
Rides the dim rack that sweeps the darkened sky.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

O Scott! with whom, in youth's serenest prime,
I wove, with careless hand, the fairy rhyme,
Bade chivalry's barbaric pomp return,
And heroes wake from every mouldering urn!
Thy powerful verse, to grace the courtly hall,
Shall many a tale of elder time recall,
The deeds of knights, the loves of dames proclaim,
And give forgotten bards their former fame.
Enough for me, if Fancy wake the shell,
To Eastern minstrels strains like thine to tell,
Till saddening Memory all our haunts restore,
The wild-wood walks by Esk's ² romantic shore,

¹ A hill (1392 feet) some five miles east of Hawick.

² The Midlothian Esk at Lasswade.

The circled hearth, which ne'er was wont to fail
In cheerful joke, or legendary tale;
Thy mind, whose fearless frankness nought could move,
Thy friendship, like an elder brother's love.
While from each scene of early life I part,
True to the beatings of this ardent heart,
When, half-deceased, with half the world between,
My name shall be unmentioned on the green,
When years combine with distance, let me be,
By all forgot, remembered yet by thee!

THE COUT OF KEELDAR

[This ballad-poem was written by Leyden for Scott's *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The most redoubted adversary of Lord Soulis, a cruel chief of Liddesdale, was "the Chief of Keeldar", popularly known as the Cout of Keeldar on account of his strength and size, who perished in a sudden encounter on the banks of the Hermitage. "Being arrayed in armour of proof, he sustained no hurt in the combat: but stumbling in retreating across the river, the hostile party held him down below water with their lances till he died."—Leyden.]

The eiry blood-hound howl'd by night,
The streamers ¹ flaunted red,
Till broken streaks of flaky light
O'er Keeldar's mountains spread.

The lady sighed as Keeldar rose:
"Come tell me, dear love mine,
Go you to hunt where Keeldar flows,
Or on the banks of Tyne?"

"The heath-bell blows, where Keeldar flows,
By Tyne the primrose pale;
But now we ride on the Scottish side,
To hunt in Liddesdale."

¹ Northern lights.

“ Gin you will ride on the Scottish side,
Sore must thy Margaret mourn;
For Soulis abhorred is Lyddall’s lord,
And I fear you ’ll ne’er return.

“ The axe he bears, it hacks and tears;
’T is formed of an earth-fast ¹ flint;
No armour of knight, though ever so wight,
Can bear its deadly dint.

“ No danger he fears, for a charmed sword he wears,
Of adderstone ² the hilt;
No Tynedale knight had ever such might,
But his heart-blood was spilt.”

“ In my plume is seen the holly ³ green,
With the leaves of the rowan tree; ³
And my casque of sand, by a mermaid’s hand,
Was formed beneath the sea.

“ Then, Margaret dear, have thou no fear!
That bodes no ill to me,
Though never a knight, by mortal might,
Could match his gramarye.” ⁴

Then forward bound both horse and hound,
And rattle o’er the vale;
As the wintry breeze through leafless trees
Drives on the pattering hail.

Behind their course the English fells
In deepening blue retire;

¹ Supposed to possess wonderful qualities, its blow was considered very severe.

² Celts supposed perforated by stings of adders.

³ To avert witchcraft.

⁴ Magic.

Till soon before them boldly swells
The muir of dun Redswire.¹

And when they reached the Redswire high,
Soft beamed the rising sun;
But formless shadows seemed to fly
Along the muir-land dun.

And when he reached the Redswire high,
His bugle Keeldar blew;
And round did float, with clamorous note
And scream, the hoarse curlew.

The next blast that young Keeldar blew,
The wind grew deadly still;
But the sleek fern, with fingery leaves,
Waved wildly o'er the hill.

The third blast that young Keeldar blew,
Still stood the limber ² fern;
And a Wee Man, of swarthy hue,
Upstarted by a cairn.

His russet weeds were brown as heath
That clothes the upland fell;
And the hair of his head was frizzly red,
As the purple heather-bell.

An urchin,³ clad in prickles red,
Clung cowering to his arm;
The hounds they howled, and backward fled,
As struck by Fairy charm.

¹ In south of Roxburghshire.

² Pliant, supple.

³ Hedgehog.

“ Why rises high the stag-hound’s cry,
Where stag-hound ne’er should be?
Why wakes that horn the silent morn,
Without the leave of me?”

“ Brown Dwarf, that o’er the muir-land strays,
Thy name to Keeldar tell!”
“ The Brown Man of the Muirs, who stays
Beneath the heather-bell.

“ ’T is sweet, beneath the heather-bell,
To live in autumn brown:
And sweet to hear the lav’rocks ¹ swell
Far, far from tower and town.

“ But woe betide the shrilling horn,
The chase’s surly cheer!
And ever that hunter is forlorn,
Whom first at morn I hear.”

Says, “ Weal nor woe, nor friend nor foe,
In thee we hope nor dread.”
But, ere the bugles green could blow,
The Wee Brown Man had fled.

And onward, onward, hound and horse,
Young Keeldar’s band have gone;
And soon they wheel, in rapid course,
Around the Keeldar Stone.

Green vervain ² round its base did creep,
A powerful seed that bore;
And oft, of yore, its channels deep
Were stained with human gore.

¹ Larks.

² Plant of imaginary virtue.

And still, when blood-drops, clotted thin,
Hang the gray moss upon,
The spirit murmurs from within,
And shakes the rocking-stone.

Around, around, young Keeldar wound,
And called in scornful tone,
With him to pass the barrier ground,
The Spirit of the Stone.

The rude crag rocked: "I come for death—
I come to work thy woe!"
And 't was the Brown Man of the Heath
That murmured from below.

But onward, onward, Keeldar passed,
Swift as the winter wind,
When, hovering on the driving blast,
The snow-flakes fall behind.

They passed the muir of berries blae,
The stone cross on the lee;
They reached the green, the bonnie brae,
Beneath the birchen tree.

This is the bonnie brae, the green,
Yet sacred to the brave,
Where still, of ancient size, is seen,
Gigantic Keeldar's grave.

The lonely shepherd loves to mark
The daisy springing fair,
Where weeps the birch of silver bark
With long dishevelled hair.

The grave is green, and round is spread
The curling lady-fern;
That fatal day the mould was red,
No moss was on the cairn.

And next they passed the chapel there;
The holy ground was by,
Where many a stone is sculptured fair,
To mark where warriors lie.

And here, beside the mountain flood,
A massy castle frowned,
Since first the Pictish race in blood,
The haunted pile did found.

The restless stream its rocky base
Assails with ceaseless din;
And many a troubled spirit strays
The dungeons dark within.

Soon from the lofty tower there hied
A knight across the vale:
"I greet your master well," he cried,
"From Soulis of Liddesdale.

"He heard your bugle's echoing call,
In his green garden bower,
And bids you to his festive hall,
Within his ancient tower."

Young Keeldar called his hunter train;
"For doubtful cheer prepare!
And, as you open force disdain,
Of secret guile beware.

“ ’T was here for Mangerton’s brave lord ¹
A bloody feast was set,
Who, weetless, at the festal board,
The bull’s broad frontlet ² met.

“ Then ever, at uncourteous feast,
Keep every man his brand;
And, as you ’mid his friends are placed
Range on the better hand.

“ And, if the bull’s ill-omened head
Appear to grace the feast,
Your whingers, ³ with unerring speed,
Plunge in each neighbour’s breast.”

In Hermitage they sat at dine,
In pomp and proud array;
And oft they filled the blood-red wine,
While merry minstrels play.

And many a hunting-song they sung,
And song of game and glee;
Then tuned to plaintive strains their tongue,
“ Of Scotland’s luv and lee.” ⁴

To wilder measures next they turn:
“ The Black, Black Bull of Noroway!” ⁵
Sudden, the tapers cease to burn,
The minstrels cease to play.

Each hunter bold, of Keeldar’s train,
Sat an enchanted man;
For cold as ice, through every vein,
The freezing life-blood ran.

¹ An Armstrong.

² Signal for murder.

³ Short swords.

⁴ From a very ancient Scottish song on the Death of King Alexander.

⁵ A tale of enchantment.

Each rigid hand the whinger wrung,
Each gazed with glaring eye;
But Keeldar from the table sprung,
Unharm'd by gramarye.

He burst the doors; the roofs resound;
With yells the castle rung;
Before him, with a sudden bound,
His favourite blood-hound sprung.

Ere he could pass, the door was barred;
And, grating harsh from under,
With creaking, jarring noise, was heard
A sound like distant thunder.

The iron clash, the grinding sound,
Announce the dire sword-mill;¹
The piteous howlings of the hound
The dreadful dungeon fill.

With breath drawn in, the murderous crew
Stood listening to the yell;
And greater still the wonder grew,
As on their ear it fell.

They listened for a human shriek
Amid the jarring sound;
They only heard, in echoes weak,
The murmurs of the hound.

The death-bell rung, and wide were flung
The castle gates amain;
While hurry out the arm'd rout,
And marshal on the plain.

¹ Barbarous machine much used on the Continent.

Ah! ne'er before in Border feud
Was seen so dire a fray!
Through glittering lances Keeldar hewed
A red corse-paven way.

His helmet formed of mermaid sand,
No lethal brand could dint;
No other arms could e'er withstand
The axe of earth-fast flint.

In Keeldar's plume the holly green,
And rowan leaves, nod on;
And vain Lord Soulis's sword was seen,
Though the hilt was adderstone.

Then up the Wee Brown Man he rose,
By Soulis of Liddesdale;
"In vain," he said, "a thousand blows
Assail the charmed mail.

"In vain by land your arrows glide,
In vain your falchions gleam—
No spell can stay the living tide,
Or charm the rushing stream."¹

And now young Keeldar reached the stream,
Above the foamy linn;
And Border lances round him gleam,
And force the warrior in.

The holly floated to the side,
And the leaf of the rowan pale;
Alas! no spell could charm the tide,
Nor the lance of Liddesdale.

¹ Magic had no power over running water.

Swift was the Cout of Keeldar's course
Along the lily lee;
But home came neither hound nor horse,
And never home came he.

Where weeps the birch with branches green,
Without the holy ground,
Between two old grey stones is seen
The warrior's ridgy mound.

And the hunters bold, of Keeldar's train,
Within yon castle's wall,
In a deadly sleep must aye remain,
Till the ruined towers down fall.

Each in his hunter's garb arrayed,
Each holds his bugle horn;
Their keen hounds at their feet are laid,
That ne'er shall wake the morn.

LUCY'S FLITTIN'

WILLIAM LAIDLAW

(1780-1845)

[In 1801 Sir Walter Scott was in the Yarrow valley collecting ballads for his *Minstrelsy*, in the company of John Leyden. When they came to Blackhouse farm, on the Douglas Burn, Leyden introduced to his companion, William Laidlaw and James Hogg, both enthusiastic about old ballad lore. That day, too, was memorable for Scott's first view of St. Mary's Loch from the narrow pass on the hills between Blackhouse and Dryhope. Later on, when fortune had proved fickle to Laidlaw in his farming venture, Willie went to live at the cottage of Kaeude near Abbotsford to be Scott's factor and amanuensis. Scott loved, esteemed, and trusted Laidlaw for his literary sympathies, his downright honesty, loveable disposition and moral worth. There is good reason for believing that "Lucy's Flittin'" had its origin in Yarrow.]

'T was when the wan leaf frae the birk-tree was fa'in',
 And Martinmas dowie had wound up the year,
 That Lucy row'd up her wee kist wi' her a' in,
 And left her auld maister and neebours sae dear.
 For Lucy had served in the glen a' the simmer,—
 She cam' there afore the flower bloom'd on the pea:
 An orphan was she, and they had been gude till her,—
 Sure that was the thing brocht the tear to her e'e.

She gaed by the stable where Jamie was stan'in';
 Richt sair was his kind heart the flittin' to see.
 "Fare-ye-weel, Lucy!" quo' Jamie, and ran in,—
 The gatherin' tears trickled fast frae his e'e.
 As down the burn-side she gaed slow wi' her flittin',
 Fare-ye-weel, Lucy! was ilka bird's sang;
 She heard the crow sayin' 't, high on the tree sittin',
 And robin was chirpin' 't the brown leaves amang.

"Oh, what is 't that pits my puir heart in a flutter?
 And what gars the tears come sae fast to my e'e?"

If I wasna ettled to be ony better,
Then what gars me wish ony better to be?
I 'm just like a lammie that loses its mither,—
Nae mither or friend the puir lammie can see;
I fear I hae tint my puir heart a' thegither,—
Nae wonder the tears fa' sae fast frae my e'e.

“ Wi' the rest o' my claes I hae row'd up the ribbon—
The bonnie blue ribbon that Jamie gae me:
Yestreen, when he gae me 't, and saw I was sabbin',
I 'll never forget the wae blink o' his e'e.
Though now he said naething but 'Fare-ye-weel,
Lucy!

It made me I neither could speak, hear, nor see:
He couldna say mair, but just 'Fare-ye-weel, Lucy!'—
Yet that I will mind till the day that I dee.

[“ The lamb likes the gowan wi' dew when it 's drookit;
The hare likes the brake, and the braird on the lea;
But Lucy likes Jamie,”—she turned and she lookit—
She thocht the dear place she wad never mair see.
—Ah, weel may young Jamie gang dowie and cheerless!
And weel may he greet on the bank o' the burn!
For bonnie sweet Lucy, sae gentle and peerless,
Lies cauld in her grave, and will never return.]¹

¹ These last lines are by Hogg.

THE YOUNG MAXWELL

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

(1784-1842)

[Born at Blackwood near Thornhill in Dumfriesshire. His father became factor to Miller of Dalswinton, who was Burns's landlord at Ellisland; as a boy of five Allan heard Burns recite "Tam o' Shanter". Cunningham collected for Cromek the most of the *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, but his *Collection* was mainly original work, or at least a rehandling of old themes. He enjoyed the friendship of Sir Walter Scott and the Carlyles.]

"Where gang ye, thou silly auld carle?
And what do ye carry there?"
"I'm gaun to the hill, thou sodger man,
To shift my sheep their lair."

Ae stride or twa took the silly auld carle,
An' a gude lang stride took he;
"I trow thou be a feck auld carle,
Will ye show the way to me?"

And he has gane wi' the silly auld carle,
Adown by the greenwood side;
"Light down and gang, thou sodger man,
For here ye canna ride."

He drew the reins o' his bonny gray steed,
An' lightly down he sprang:
Of the comeliest scarlet was his weir coat,
Whare the gowden tassels hang.

He has thrown aff his plaid, the silly auld carle,
An' his bonnet frae 'boon his bree;
An' wha was it but the young Maxwell!
An' his gude brown sword drew he!

“ Thou killed my father, thou vile Southron!
An’ ye killed my brethren three!
Whilk brake the heart o’ my ae sister,
I loved as the light o’ my ee!

“ Draw out yer sword, thou vile Southron!
Red-wat wi’ blude o’ my kin!
That sword it crapped the bonniest flower
E’er lifted its head to the sun!

“ There ’s ae sad stroke for my dear auld father!
There ’s twa for my brethren three!
An’ there ’s ane to thy heart for my ae sister,
Wham I loved as the light o’ my ee.”

THE BONNIE BAIRNS

The lady she walk’d in yon wild wood,
Aneath the hollin tree;
And she was aware of two bonnie bairns
Were running at her knee.

The tane it pull’d a red, red rose,
With a hand as soft as silk;
The other, it pull’d the lily pale,
Wi’ a hand mair white than milk.

“ Now, why pull ye the red rose, fair bairns?
And why the white lily?”

“ O we sue wi’ them at the seat of grace
For the soul of thee, ladiel!”

“ O bide wi’ me, my twa bonnie bairns!
I’ll cleid ye rich and fine;

And all for the blaeberries of the wood,
Ye 'se hae white bread and wine.

She heard a voice, a sweet low voice,
Say, "Weans, ye tarry lang;"
She stretch'd her hand to the youngest bairn:
"Kiss me before ye gang!"

She sought to take a lily hand,
And kiss a rosie chin:—
"O, nought sae pure can hide the touch
Of a hand red-wet wi' sin!"

The stars are shooting to and fro,
The wild-fire fill'd the air,
As that lady follow'd thae bonnie bairns
For three lang hours and mair.

"O! where dwell ye, my ain, sweet bairns?
I 'm wae and weary grown!"
"O! lady, we live where woe never is,
In a land to sin unknown."

There came a shape which seem'd to her
As a rainbow 'mang the rain;
And sair these sweet babes pled for her,
And they pled and pled in vain.

"And O! and O!" said the youngest babe,
"My mother maun come in:"

"And O! and O!" said the eldest babe,
"Wash her twa hands frae sin."

"And O! and O!" said the youngest babe,
"She nursed me on her knee:"

"And O! and O!" said the eldest babe,
"She 's a mither yet to me."

“ And O! and O!” said the babes baith,
“ Take her where waters rin,
And white as the milk o’ her white breast
Wash her twa hands frae sin.”

HAME, HAME, HAME

Hame, hame, hame, hame fain wad I be,
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!
When the flower is i’ the bud, and the leaf is on the tree,
The lark shall sing me hame in my ain countrie.
Hame, hame, hame, hame fain wad I be,
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!

The green leaf o’ loyalty’s beginning for to fa’,
The bonnie white rose it is withering an’ a’;
But I’ll water ’t wi’ the blude of usurping tyrannie,
An’ green it will grow in my ain countrie,
Hame, hame, hame, hame fain wad I be,
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!

Oh, there’s naught frae ruin my countrie can save,
But the keys o’ kind heaven to open the grave,
That a’ the noble martyrs wha died for loyalty,
May rise again and fight for their ain countrie.
Hame, hame, hame, hame fain wad I be,
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!

The great are now gane, a’ wha ventured to save,
The new grass is springing on the tap o’ their grave,
But the sun through the mirk blinks blithe in my ee,
“ I’ll shine on ye yet in yer ain countrie.”
Hame, hame, hame, hame fain wad I be,
Hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!

O THE EWE-BUCHTIN'S BONNY

THOMAS PRINGLE

(1789-1834)

[Born at the farm of Blakelaw, near Kelso. The first stanza was written by Lady Grisell Baillie.]

O the ewe-buchtin' 's ¹ bonny, both e'en and morn,
When our blithe shepherds play on the bog-reed and
horn;

While we're milkin' they're liltin' sae jocund and
clear;

But my heart 's like to break when I think o' my dear.

O the shepherds tak pleasure to blow on the horn,

To raise up their flocks i' the fresh simmer morn:

On the steep ferny banks they feed pleasant and free—

But alas! my dear heart, all my sighin' 's for thee!

O the sheep-herdin' 's lightsome amang the green braes,
Where Kale ² wimples ³ clear 'neath the white-blossom'd
slaes —

Where the wild-thyme and meadow-queen scent the
saft gale,

And the cushat croons luesomely ⁴ doon in the dale.

There the lintwhite ⁵ and mavis sing sweet frae the
thorn,

And blithe lilt the laverock ⁶ aboon the green corn,

And a' things rejoice in the simmer's glad prime—

But my heart's wi' my love in the far foreign clime!

O the haymakin' 's pleasant, in bright, sunny June—

The hay-time is cheery when hearts are in tune—

¹ Sheep folding. ² Tributary of the Teviot. ³ Flows softly.

⁴ Ring-dove coos happily.

⁵ Linnet.

⁶ Lark.

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G

But while others are jokin' and laughin' sae free,
 There 's a pain at my heart and a tear i' my e'e.
 At e'en i' the gloamin', adown by the burn,
 Fu' dowie and wae, aft I daunder ¹ and mourn;
 Amang the lang broom I sit greetin' alane,
 And sigh for my dear and the days that are gane.

O the days o' our youth-heid were heartsome and gay,
 When we herded thegither by sweet Gateshaw ² brae,
 When we plaited the rushes and pu'd ³ the witch-bells
 By the Kale's ferny howms ⁴ and on Hownam's ² green
 fells.

But young Sandy bood gang ⁵ to the wars wi' the
 laird,

To win honour and gowd—(gif his life it be spared!)
 Ah! little care I for wealth, favour, or fame,
 Gin I had my dear shepherd but safely at hamel

Then, round our wee cot though gruff winter should
 roar,

And poortith glower ⁶ in like a wolf at the door;
 Though our toom ⁷ purse had barely twa boddles ⁸ to
 clink,

And a barley-meal scone were the best on our bink; ⁹
 Yet, he wi' his hirsle, ¹⁰ and I wi' my wheel,
 Through the howe ¹¹ o' the year we wad fend ¹² unco
 weel—

Till the lintwhite and laverock, and lambs bleatin'
 fain,

Brought back the blithe time o' ewe-buchtin' again.

¹ Wander aimlessly.

² Place on Kale-water.

³ Pulled.

⁴ Flat margins.

⁶ Felt bound to go.

⁶ Poverty glare.

⁷ Empty.

⁸ Small coins.

⁹ Plate-rack with shelf.

¹⁰ Flock.

¹¹ Dead of winter.

¹² Provide sufficient.

THE DOWIE DENS O' YARROW

HENRY SCOTT RIDDELL

(1797-1870)

[Born in Eskdale, bred a shepherd, was afterwards educated at Edinburgh University and became minister at Teviothead. His song, "Scotland Yet", beginning "Gae bring my guid auld harp ane mair" is well known.]

Oh, sister, there are midnight dreams
That pass not with the morning,
Then ask not why my reason swims
In a brain sae wildly burning;
And ask not why I fancy how
Yon wee bird sings wi' sorrow,
For bluid lies mingled wi' the dew
In the dowie ¹ dens o' Yarrow.

My dream's wild light was not o' night,
Nor o' the doolfu' morning,
Thrice on the stream was seen the gleam
That seemed his sprite returning;
For sword-girt men came down the glen,
An hour before the morrow,
And pierced the heart aye true to mine,
In the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

Oh! there are red, red drops o' dew
Upon the wild flower's blossom,
But they couldna cool my burning brow,
And shall not stain my bosom;
But from the clouds o' yon dark sky
A cold, cold shroud I'll borrow,
And long and deep shall be my sleep
In the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

¹ Melancholy.

This form the bluid-dyed flower shall press
 By the heart o' him that lo'ed me;
 And I'll steal frae his lips a long, long kiss,
 In the bower where oft he wooed me;
 For my arm shall fold and my tresses shield
 The form o' my death-cold marrow,
 When the breeze shall bring the raven's wing
 O'er the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

ANNIE LAURIE

LADY JOHN SCOTT

(1810-1900)

[This gifted lady was the eldest daughter of John Spottiswood of Spottiswood, Berwickshire; and married Lord John Scott, a son of the fourth Duke of Buccleuch. She wrote many songs, among them the ever-popular "Annie Laurie" (1835), which is really an improved version of the old song by William Douglas of Fingland, Kirkcudbrightshire. His words are given for the sake of comparison:

ANNIE LAURIE

"Maxwelton banks are bonnie,
 Where early fa's the dew,
 Where me and Annie Laurie
 Made up the promise true;
 Made up the promise true,
 And ne'er forget will I
 And for bonnie Annie Laurie,
 I'd lay down my head and die.

"She's backit like a peacock,
 She's breastit like a swan,
 She's jimp about the middle,
 Her waist ye weel may span;
 Her waist ye weel may span,
 She has a rolling eye,
 And for bonnie Annie Laurie
 I'd lay down my head and die."

The Compiler wishes to say that Miss Margaret Warrender very kindly corrected his versions of these poems by Lady John Scott.

"They are now exactly as Lady John used to sing them."

—Miss Warrender.]

Maxwelton braes are bonnie,
 Where early fa's the dew,

And it 's there that Annie Laurie
Gi'ed me her promise true;
Gi'ed me her promise true,
Which ne'er forgot will be,
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I 'd lay down my head and dee.

Her brow is like the snaw-drift,
Her throat is like the swan,
Her face it is the bonniest
That e'er the sun shone on.
That e'er the sun shone on,
And dark blue is her e'e,
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I 'd lay down my head and dee.

Like dew on the gowan lying
Is the fa' o' her fairy feet,
And like winds in summer sighing
Her voice is low and sweet.
Her voice is low and sweet,
And she 's a' the world to me;
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I 'd lay down my head and dee.

ETTRICK

Oh, murmuring waters!
Have ye no message for me?
Ye come from the hills of the west,
Where his step wanders free.
Did he not whisper my name?
Did he not utter one word?
And trust that its sound o'er the rush
Of thy streams might be heard?

Oh, murmuring waters!
The sounds of the moorlands I hear,
The scream of the her'n and the eagle,
The bell ¹ of the deer.
The rustling of heather and fern,
The shiver of grass on the lea,
The sigh of the wind from the hill,
Have ye no voice for me?

Oh, murmuring waters!
Flow on, ye have no voice for me—
Bear the wild songs of the hills
To the depths of the sea.
Bright stream from the founts of the west,
Rush on, with thy music and glee!
Oh! to be borne to my rest
In the cold waves with thee!

LAMMERMUIR ²

Oh, wild and stormy Lammermuir!
Would I could feel once more
The cold north wind, the wintry blast,
That sweeps thy mountains o'er!
Would I could see thy drifted snow,
Deep, deep in cleuch and glen;
And hear the scream of the wild birds,
And be free on thy hills again!

I hate this dreary southern land!
I weary day by day
For the music of thy many streams
In the birchwoods far away!

¹ Call.

² In north of Berwickshire.

From all I love they banish me,
But my thoughts they cannot chain;
And they bear me back, wild Lammermuir,
To thy distant hills again.

LAMMERMOOR

ANDREW WANLESS

(1824-1898)

[Sad is the song of the Scottish exile. Here Wanless returns on imagination from Canada or Longformacus, the "Capital of Lammermoor", and his home.]

The heather blooms upon the knowes,
Primroses spring in bielded¹ deils,
The gowans smile on bank and brae,
Amang the blue and bonnie bells.
Down o'er the rocks the burnies fa',
They toddle on, they rin sae pure,
Through birken bowers and yellow brume
That fringe the glades in Lammermoor.

The lark sings in the lift sae blue,
The mavis sings upon the tree.
While lowly on the milk-white thorn
The robin chirps wi' gladsome glee.
I 'll never see auld Scotland mair,
Misfortune's cloud does o'er me lour,
Nae mair I 'll hear the linties' sang
Amang the hills o' Lammermoor.

Yet there, in death's cold, cold embrace,
Lies aye I 'll ne'er forget to lo'e,
Through weal and woe her gentle heart
To me was constant, kind, and true.

¹ Sheltered.

Our sindered ¹ hearts are in ae grave,
Yet I maun still my griefs endure,
By day I mourn, by night my dreams
Are in her grave in Lammermoor.

A SONG OF YARROW

JAMES BROWN

(1832-1904)

[Better known as J. B. Selkirk. At one time was a tweed manufacturer and spent nearly the whole of his life in Selkirk. The description of a Border burn is taken from "The Last Epistle to Tammus"; and all the extracts from *Poems* by J. B. Selkirk, published by James Lewis, Selkirk, 1911. Other works: "Ethics and Æsthetics of Modern Poetry", and "Bible Truths with Shakesperean Parallels".]

September, and the sun was low,
The tender greens were flecked with yellow,
And autumn's ardent after-glow
Made Yarrow's uplands rich and mellow.

Between me and the sunken sun,
Where gloaming gathered in the meadows,
Contented cattle, red and dun,
Were slowly browsing in the shadows.

And out beyond them Newark reared
Its quiet tower against the sky,
As if its walls had never heard
Of wassail-rout or battle cry.

O'er moss-grown roofs that once had rung
To reiver's riot, Border brawl,
The slumberous shadows mutely hung,
And silence deepened over all.

¹ Sundered.

Above the high horizon bar
A cloud of golden mist was lying,
And over it a single star
Soared heavenward as the day was dying.

No sound, no word, from field or ford,
Nor breath of wind to float a feather,
While Yarrow's murmuring waters poured
A lonely music through the heather.

In silent fascination bound,
As if some mighty spell obeying,
The hills stood listening to the sound
And wondering what the stream was saying.

What secret to the inner ear,
What happier message, was it bringing,
With more of hope, and less of fear,
Than men dare mix with earthly singing?

Earth's song it was, yet heavenly growth—
It was not joy, it was not sorrow—
A strange heart-fulness of them both
The wandering singer seemed to borrow,

Like one that sings and does not know,
But in a dream hears voices calling,
Of those that died long years ago,
And sings although the tears be falling.

Oh Yarrow! garlanded with rhyme
That clothed thee in a mournful glory,
Though sunsets of an elder time
Had never crowned thee with a story.

Still would I wander by thy stream,
Still listen to the lonely singing,
That gives me back the golden dream
Through which old echoes yet are ringing.

Love's sunshine! sorrows bitter blast!
Dear Yarrow, we have seen together;
For years have come, and years have past,
Since first we met among the heather.

Ah! those, indeed, were happy hours
When first I knew thee, gentle river;
But now thy bonnie birken bowers
To me, alas, are changed for ever!

The best, the dearest, all have gone,
Gone like the bloom upon the heather,
And left us singing here alone,
Beside life's cold and winter weather.

I, too, pass on, but when I 'm dead
Thou still shalt sing by night and morrow,
And help the aching heart and head
To bear the burden of its sorrow.

And summer's flowers shall linger yet
Where all thy mossy margins guide thee;
And minstrels, met as we have met,
Shall sit and sing their songs beside thee.

A BORDER BURN

Ah, Tam` gie me a Border burn
 That canna ¹rin without a turn,
 And wi' its bonnie babble fills
 The glens amang oor native hills.
 How men that ance have ken'd about it
 Can leeve their ²lifer lives without it,
 I canna tell, for day and nicht
 It comes unca'd for to my sicht.
 I see 't this moment, plain as day,
 As it comes bickerin' o'er the brae,
 Atween the clumps o' purple heather,
 Glistenin' in the summer weather,
 Syne divin' in below the grun',
 Where, hidden frae the sicht and sun,
 It gibbers like a deed man's ghost
 That clamours for the licht it's lost,
 Till oot again the loupin' limmer ³
 Comes dancin' doon through shine and shimmer
 At headlong pace, till wi' a jaw ⁴
 It jumps the rocky waterfa',
 And cuts sic cantrips ⁵ in the air—
 The picture-pentin' man's despair;
 A rountree bus' ⁶ oot o'er the tap o' t,
 A glassy pule to kep ⁷ the lap o' t,
 While on the brink the blue harebell
 Keeks ⁸ o'er to see its bonnie sel',
 And sittin' chirpin' a' its lane
 A water-waggy ⁹ on a stane.

¹ Frolicsome hussy.² Twist.³ Tricks.⁴ Rowan bush.⁵ Catch.⁶ Looks shyly.⁷ Red wagtail.

Ay, penter lad, thraw to the wund
 Your canvas, this is holy grund:
 Wi' a' its highest airt acheevin',
 The picter's deed, and this is la' sin'.

SELKIRK AFTER FLODDEN

(A Widow's Dirge, October, 1513)

[According to tradition seventy to eighty well-armed men from Selkirk, headed by William Brydone, the Town Clerk, joined the army of James IV on its southward march to Flodden (1513); and played a gallant part in the battle. Only one man returned, Fletcher by name, bearing an English standard, which now graces the walls of the Free Library in Selkirk. The town was at one time famous for its "single-soled shoon"; hence the natives of Selkirk are known as "souters".]

It's but a month the morn
 Sin' a' was peace and plenty;
 Oor hairst was halfins shorn,
 Eident ¹ men, and lasses denty,
 But noo it's a' distress—
 Never mair a merry meetin';
 For half the bairns are faitherless,
 And a' the women greetin'.

O Flodden Field!

Miles and miles round Selkirk toun,
 Where forest flow'rs are fairest,
 Ilka lassie's stricken down
 Wi' the fate that fa's the sairest.
 A' the lads they used to meet
 By Ettrick braes or Yarrow
 Lyin' thrammelt ² head and feet
 In Brankstone's ³ deadly barrow!

O Flodden Field!

¹ Busy.

² Mixed up, thrown together.

³ Branxton about three miles south-east of Coldstream.

Frae every cleuch ¹ and clan
 The best o' the braid Border
 Rose like a single man
 To meet the royal order.
 Oor Burgh ² toun itsel'
 Sent its seventy ³ doun the glen;
 Ask Fletcher how they fell,
 Bravely fechting, ane to ten!
 O Flodden Field!

Round about their gallant king, ⁴
 For countrie and for croon,
 Stude the dauntless Border ring,
 Till the last was hackit doun.
 I blame na what has been—
 They maun fa' that canna flee—
 But oh, to see what I hae seen,
 To see what now I see!
 O Flodden Field!

The souters a' fu' croose, ⁵
 O'er their leather and their lingle, ⁶
 Wi' their shoon in ilka hoose,
 Sat contentit round the ingle. ⁷
 Noo there 's naething left but dool,—
 Never mair their wark will cheer them;
 In Flodden's bluidy pool
 They 'll naether walt ⁸ nor wear them!
 O Flodden Field!

Whar the weavers used to meet,
 In ilka bieldy ⁹ corner,

¹ Glen. ² Selkirk. ³ See note. ⁴ James IV. ⁵ Merry.
⁶ Thread. ⁷ Fire-side. ⁸ Make. ⁹ Sheltered.

Noo there 's nane in a' the street
 Savin' here and there a mourner,
 Walkin' lanely as a wraith,
 Or if she meet anither
 Just a word below their braith
 O' some slauchtered son or brither!
 O Flodden Field!

'There stands the gudeman's loom
 That used tae gang sae cheerie
 Untentit ¹ noo, and toom,²
 Makin' a' the hoose sae eerie,
 Till the sicht I canna dree;³
 For the shuttles lyin' dumb
 Speak the loudlier to me
 O' him that wunna come.
 O Flodden Field!

Sae at nicht I cover 't o'er,
 Just tae haud it frae my een,
 But I haena yet the pow'r
 To forget what it has been;
 And I listen through the hoose
 For the chappin' ⁴ o' the lay,
 Till the scrapin' o' a moose
 Tak's my very braith away.
 O Flodden Field!

Then I turn to sister Jean,
 And my airms aboot her twine,
 And I kiss her sleepless een,
 For her heart 's as sair as mine, —

¹ Uncared for.² Empty.³ Bear.⁴ Knocking.

A heart ance fu' o' fun,
And hands that ne'er were idle,
Wi' a' her cleedin' ¹ spun
Against her Jamie's bridal.
O Flodden Field!

Noo we 've naether hands nor hairt—
In oor grief the wark 's forgotten,
Tho' it 's wantit every airt,²
And the craps ³ are lyin' rotten.
War's awesome blast 's gane by,
And left a land forlorn;
In daith's dool hairst they lie,
The shearers an' the shorn.
O Flodden Field!

Wi' winter creepin' near us,
When the nights are drear an' lang,
Nane to help us, nane to hear us,
On the weary gate we gang!⁴
Lord o' the quick an' deed,
Sin' oor ain we canna see,
In mercy mak' gude speed,
And bring us whar they be,
Far, far, frae Flodden Field!

¹ Clothing. ² In every direction. ³ Crops. ⁴ Way we go.

"AND THERE WILL I BE BURIED"

Suggested by a Mausoleum in Teviotdale

THOMAS DAVIDSON

(1838-1870)

[Born at Oxnam Row, a farm near Jedburgh. The story of his life is admirably told by the Rev. James Brown in *The Life of a Scottish Probationer*, which also contains his poems and extracts from his letters. Davidson's promising career as a poet and preacher was cut short by consumption.]

Tell me not the good and wise
Care not where their dust reposes—
That to him in death who lies
Rocky beds are even as roses.

I've been happy above ground;
I can ne'er be happy under
Out of gentle Teviot's sound—
Part us not, then, far asunder,

Lay me here where I may see
Teviot round his meadows flowing,
And around and over me
Winds and clouds for ever going.

TWILIGHT ON TWEED

ANDREW LANG

(1844-1912)

[Born in the house called Viewfield (now a nursing home), in Selkirk. Some of the older men in the Royal Burgh remember Andrew well, particularly his enthusiasm for cricket. It was a common thing for them, when boys, to go down to the old cricket field to see "Andrew Lang's twisters" (breaking balls). Poet, journalist, critic, historian. his career cannot be dealt with here. Although very prolific in literary output he wrote few poems which have definite application to the Borders.]

Three crests against the saffron sky,
Beyond the purple plain,
The kind remembered melody
Of Tweed once more again.

Wan water from the Border hills,
Dear voice from the old years,
Thy distant music lulls and stills,
And moves to quiet tears.

Like a loved ghost thy fabled flood
Fleets through the dusky land;
Where Scott, come home to die, has stood,
My feet returning stand.

A mist of memory broods and floats,
The Border waters flow;
The air is full of ballad notes,
Borne out of long ago.

Old songs that sung themselves to me,
Sweet through a boy's day-dream,
While trout below the blossom'd tree
Plashed in the golden stream.

• • • • •

Twilight, and Tweed, and Eildon Hill,
 Fair and too fair you be;
 You tell me that the voice is still
 That should have welcomed me.

A SUNSET ON YARROW

The wind and the day had lived together,
 They died together, and far away
 Spoke farewell in the sultry weather,
 Out of the sunset, over the heather,
 The dying wind and the dying day.

Far in the south, the summer levin
 Flushed a flame in the gray soft air.
 We seemed to look on the hills of heaven;
 You saw within, but to me 't was given
 To see your face, as an angel's, there.

Never again, ah surely never
 Shall we wait and watch, where of old we stood,
 The low good-night of the hill and the river,
 The faint light fade, and the wan stars quiver,
 Twain grown one in the solitude.

BALLADE OF THE TWEED

The ferox ¹ rins in rough Loch Awe,
 A weary cry frae ony toun;
 The Spey, that louns ² o'er linn and fa',
 They praise a' ither streams aboon;
 They boast their braes o' bonny Doon:

¹ Lake trout.

² Jumps.

Gie *me* to hear the ringing reel,
 Where shillfas ¹ sing and cushats ² croon
 By fair Tweed-side, at Ashiestiel!

There 's Ettrick, Meggat, Ail, and a',
 Where trout swim thick in May and June;
 Ye 'll see them take in showers o' snaw
 Some blinking, cauldrie ³ April noon:
 Rax ower ⁴ the palmer and march-broun, ⁵
 And syne we 'll show a bonny creel, ⁶
 In spring or simmer, late or soon,
 By fair Tweed-side, at Ashiestiel!

There 's mony a water, great or sma',
 Gaes singing in his siller ⁷ tune,
 Through glen and heugh, and hope and shaw,
 Beneath the sun-licht or the moon:
 But set us in our fishing-shoon
 Between the Caddon-burn and Peel,
 And syne we 'll cross the heather brown
 By fair 'Tweed-side at Ashiestiel!

ENVOY

Deil take the dirty, trading loon
 Wad gar the water ca' ⁸ his wheel,
 And drift his dyes and poisons down
 By fair Tweed-side at Ashiestiel!

¹ Chaffinches.

² Ring-doves.

³ Chilly.

⁴ Hand over.

⁵ Fishing flies.

⁶ Basket.

⁷ Silver.

⁸ Drive.

QUEEN EILDON

REV. WILLIAM SHILLINGLAW CROCKETT

(B. 1866)

[Born at Earlstoun, Berwickshire; educated at the Parish School there, and at Edinburgh University. Was an apprentice chemist for four years, then studied for the Church of Scotland ministry, being inducted to the charge of Tweedsmuir in 1894. Has written *The Scott Country* and many other books on the Borders.]

Queen Eildon keeps her ancient throne:
Though thrones have tumbled down
Secure is her dominion grown
Under her triple crown.

Born of the reeking 'quake and fire,
She raised her regal seat:
A thousand ages of desire
Crept round her rugged feet.

She saw the Master-craftsman shape
Her channels wide and deep,
Her rivers from the hills escape,
Her smiling valleys sweep:

Her breadth of plain, her grace of field,
Her wreath of clinging wood;
And growth of human progress yield
Its harvestry of good.

She saw a hundred hamlets rise;
Her glorious abbeys rear
Their cloistered corbels to the skies—
And knew her hour was near:

The hour of her enchanting sway—
Hour of her dear desire
That patient filled her cloudy day
Of conflict and of fire.

Merlin the wizard wrought his spell,
Michael his magic whim,
(So long-descended legends tell
Their doings black and grim).

Arthur she summoned to her side;
(When shall his knights be free?)
True Thomas wooed his elfin bride
Beneath her knotted tree.

Walter the Abbot was her best—
His the true witching art
That gave her by the world confessed
A kingdom of the heart.

Long past the 'quake, long through the fire,
In Time's strange altering scene,
Full now the cup of her desire—
She reigns the Border Queen.

TRUE THOMAS

Gone is the Eildon tree for aye,
Nothing is left save Eildon Stone
To tell where once True Thomas lay
Dreaming, at dawning day, alone.

But on the glittering streams of Tweed
A spell romantic lingers still,
As when the Rhymer tuned his reed,
And sang beside this haunted hill.

As when he sang of gay Tristan
And Isolde, and of quenchless love,
Holding in thrall the thoughts of man
By camp and field, in hall and grove.

As when his own swift-conquered heart
Smitten with passion wild and keen
Dared not oppose that archer's dart—
The glamour of an Elfland Queen.

As when with sure prophetic eye
He saw the distant ages glide,
And vowed, whatever race passed by,
Haig should be Haig of Bemersyde.

As when he saw the Bannock Burn
Redden with English blood; and stayed
To weep o'er Flodden Field forlorn,
Or Ancrum's maimed, undaunted Maid.

As when, at gathering eve, he heard
The unescapeable command
How henceforth he must "dree his weird"—
A hostage meet for Faeryland.

.
Yet still on Tweed the spell abides,
By Eildon Hill, at Eildon Stone,
Until the fair Enchantress rides
To give True Thomas to his own.

THE TWEED

WILLIAM HENRY OGILVIE

(B. 1869)

[Born at Holefield, Kelso; educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh; spent eleven years in the Australian Bush; was for two years Professor of Agricultural Journalism in Iowa State College, U.S.A. Has written many books of verse.]

Shining and shadowy, verdant-walled
By his banks of spreading beeches,
Thundering over the foaming cauld
And sliding on silver reaches,
Twisting and turning by haugh and lea
Tweed goes down to the windy sea.

Out of the West he takes his way,
And out of the Mossypaul heather
Teviot comes from the hill-mists grey
And the two take hands together,
Laughing comrades that wander down
From abbey to castle, from town to town.

By Tweed as he rolls 'neath the Eildons Three
With the moon in the Melrose arches,
Do the raiders ride again knee to knee,
Trooping down on the English marches?
As he glides where the walls of Dryburgh stand
Does her Great Dead wave him a courtly hand?

By Kelso Bridge at the midnight hour
Stand the monks at the abbey-railing?
Does he hear a guard on the Norham Tower
Through the ghostly moon-mist hailing?
Is there stain of blood where a phantom Till
Creeps from the shadow of Flodden Hill?

Beside him in tiny glen and strath,
With a love that his songs embolden,
Gallant and girl by the river-path
Go down through the grasses golden,
Planning a life that as smooth shall be
As the flow of his waves to the waiting sea.

In the heart of the night go slow, go slow,
As you drift by those dim wraiths signing;
But, Tweed, for your lovers leap and flow
When the golden sun is shining!
For dead men beckon and grey ghosts call,
But love in its laughter forgets them all!

KELSO BRIDGE

There is one spot where memory guides
From time to time my restless heart—
A fair, fair spot, where silver tides
Break on grey piers and drift apart
Round pillars spun with water-weed,
Down channels where the foam is whirled;
So beats my love of home, O Tweed!
Against the barriers of the world!

Sunlit or swept by winter's blast
The old bridge stands, a link between
The Abbey's hoar and wrinkled past
And the young elm-bud's waking green;
The nesting rooks above it wheel
From elm to elm on sable wings;
Beneath it, racing round the reel,
The line upon the bent rod sings.

Across the world hope's bridges bear
The wanderer's never-resting feet,
But peace and rest are mingled where
Earth's fairest rivers, mingling, meet.
On pillars twined with water-weed
Your silver tide is ceaseless hurled;
So beats my love of home, O Tweed!
Against the barriers of the world.

THE RAIDERS

Last night a wind from Lammermoor came roaring up
the glen
With the tramp of trooping horses and the laugh of
reckless men,
And struck a mailed hand on the gate and cried in rebel
glee:
"Come forth. Come forth, my Borderer, and ride the
March with me!"

I said, "Oh! Wind of Lammermoor, the night's too
dark to ride,
And all the men that fill the glen are ghosts of men that
died!
The floods are down in Bowmont Burn, the moss is
fetlock-deep;
Go back, wild Wind of Lammermoor, to Lauderdale—
and sleep!"

Out spoke the Wind of Lammermoor, "We know the
road right well,
The road that runs by Kale and Jed across the Carter
Fell,

There is no man of all the men in this grey troop of
mine
But blind might ride the Borderside from Teviothead
to Tyne!"

The horses fretted on their bits and pawed the flints to
fire,
The riders swung them to the South full-faced to their
desire;
"Come!" said the Wind from Lammermoor, and spoke
full scornfully,
"Have ye no pride to mount and ride your fathers' road
with me?"

A roan horse to the gate they led, foam-flecked and
travelled far,
A snorting roan that tossed his head and flashed his fore-
head star;
There came a sound of clashing steel and hoof-tramp
up the glen.
. . . And two by two we cantered through, a troop of
ghostly men!

.
I know not if the farms we fired are burned to ashes
yet!
I know not if the stirks grew tired before the stars were
set!
I only know that late last night when northern winds
blew free,
A troop of men rode up the glen and brought a horse
for me!

ON CHEVIOT'S SHOULDER

Up here where the winding sheep-tracks go
By the knoll and the naked boulder
The old hill's plaid of the winter snow
Has slipped from his wind-swept shoulder.

The clouds are scattered; the sun rides through,
All earth with his splendour gilding;
The loch is lit with a lighter blue
And a swan in the reeds is building.

A lark is singing in love's old way,
With his heart and his wings a-quiver;
He knows the worth of a morn in May,
And the song to sing to the Giver!

Down in the valley, a silver thread,
Tweed to the sea runs slowly,
And round him an old romance is spread
Like a presence hushed and holy.

And here where the kingdoms march and meet,
And Cheviot stands as warder,
Witching and sweet lies under our feet
All the matchless pride of the Border.

Not a foot of ground in this grey morass,
Not a space in yon stretch of heather,
But has heard the hoofs of the horses pass
As the reivers rode together.

Not a silent glen in this range's shade
But has rung to the boast of battle,
But has heard the sob of a Southron maid
And the lowing of English cattle.

But peace lies over this still May-morn
Like the mist on the Bowmont lying,
And strife has fled, to the silence borne
Like a gull to the Solway flying.

FLODDEN HILL

When the dusk draws home the cattle,
What knights in their trenches turn?
What fires of the pride of battle
Through the bars of their helmets burn?
What steeds are the bridles biting?
What hafts are the gauntlets fitting?
What casques are the claymores splitting
To toss to the hawk and hern?

When the moon is a-march in Heaven,
When the beautiful woods are still,
What trumpet call is given?
What troop rides over the hill?
What horses come proudly neighing?
What songs are the night-winds saying
To the torn red pennons swaying
A-dip to the tide of Till?

When the brown owls hoot in shadow,
When the raiding foxes call,
What King comes over the meadow
To put to the touch his all?
What blades in the moon are gleaming?
What blackcock feathers are streaming
Above those hosts of dreaming;
This flower of a land to fall?

What wail to the stars has risen,
What wail of defeat and woe?
What souls from their mortal prison
To the mists of the grey moon go?
What knight to the north is riding
With news of a grim betiding?
What wraith through the lowlands gliding
On a war-horse spent and slow.

Was there ever a trumpet calling?
Was there ever a troop rode by?
Was it only the dead leaves falling
That wailed to a windy sky?
Is there no grass red and sodden?
No trampled field and trodden?
Is it only a dream of Flodden
Where silent the dead men lie?

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This ae nighte, this ae nighte, - - - -	12
Three crests against the saffron sky, - - - -	177
Thus while I ape the measure wild - - - -	113
True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank; - - - -	1
"T was when the wan leaf frae the birk-tree wa' fa'in', - - - -	155
Up here where the winding sheep-tracks go - - - -	187
Up wi' the Souters o' Selkirk, - - - -	75
When Meggy and me were acquaint - - - -	80
When, musing on companions gone, - - - -	120
When the dusk draws home the cattle, - - - -	188
Where Bortha hoarse, that loads the mounds with sand, - - - -	141
" Where gang ye, thou silly auld carle? - - - -	157
" Why weep ye by the tide, ladie? - - - -	130
Willy's rare, and Willy's fair, - - - -	68
Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease, - - - -	23



